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THE LIFE OF  
LAURENCE BISHOP OF  
HÓLAR IN ICELAND  
(LAURENTIUS SAGA)

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by  
Einarr Haflidason

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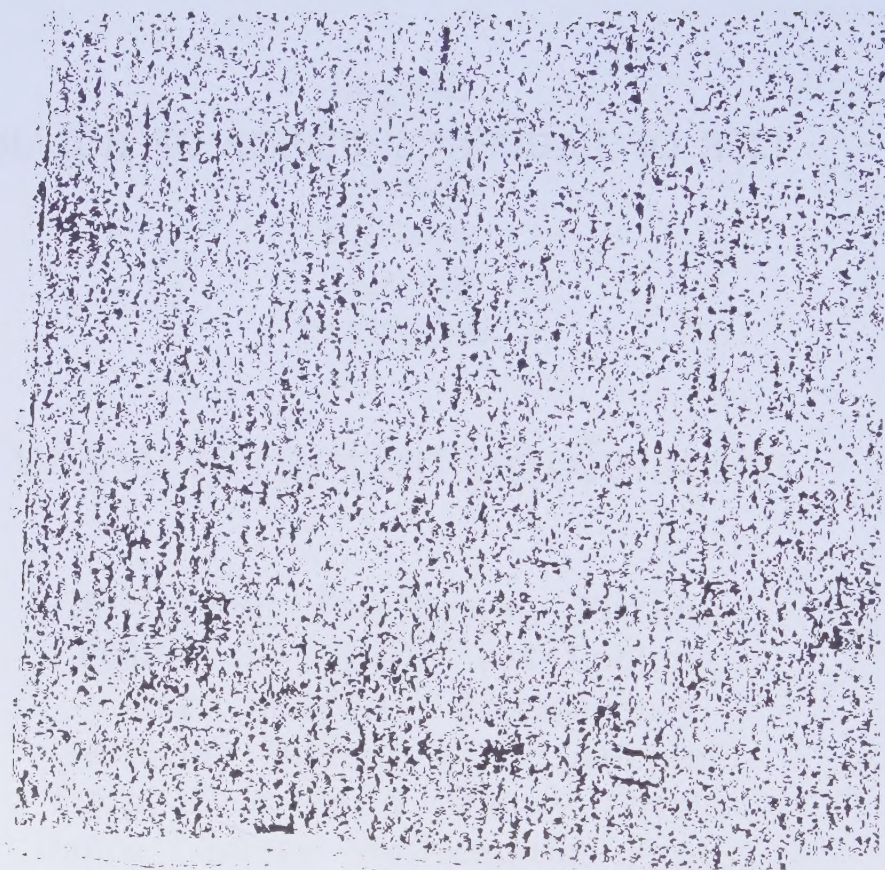
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LIFE OF LAURENCE, BISHOP OF HÓLAR







THE LIFE OF LAURENCE BISHOP  
OF HÓLAR IN ICELAND (*LAURENTIUS SAGA*) BY EINAR HAFLIDASON  
TRANSLATED FROM THE ICELANDIC  
BY OLIVER ELTON



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## PREFACE

IN the year 1106, the long arm of the Catholic Church reached the little town of Hólar, in North Iceland, and there, almost on the habitable extreme of earth, planted her most northern bishopric. Marvellous mother, never satisfied till she had set her puissant children on the frozen if not on the 'flaming frontier' of the world! The first bishop of the new See—which was formed<sup>1</sup> to relieve the distant and hard-worked bishop of Skálholt, and to minister to the populous Northern Quarter—was John Ögmundarson, the subject of the beautiful biography that bears his name, and often spoken of in the following pages with every term of sainthood. A long line of prelates followed; and in 1267, three years after the complete submission of the country to Norway, was

<sup>1</sup> See *Jón's Saga*, ch. 19; and Note <sup>3</sup> below.

born one of their most striking figures, Laurentius or Laurence Kálfsson, in familiar Norse 'Lafranz. His Life, written by his careful if somewhat near-sighted disciple Einar Haflidason, is here translated. A true pastor—dogged, imperious, beneficent towards men, towards his God humbly and radiantly pious—Laurence is not only a dominant figure in the church troubles of his time, but in his inner life shines to us almost with the light of the saints. The pioneers of religion in Norse lands, surrounded by bloody and intricate vendettas, involved in fierce litigation with laymen and with each other, needed all their heritage of the Viking demon; they were the axes of God, and had to be sharp. All the more singular is the literary product they inspired—the ecclesiastical biography or Saga. Like the *Passion Hymns* of a later day, these histories of the Icelandic bishops reveal a religious language which is beautiful, tender, unrheterical, free from false unction; and, flowing in a soft abundant current, shows the wish of the writer, not to be admired, but to relieve his heart and to penetrate our own.

These are only some of the qualities of a class of



composition in which the Icclander was a master. Others—such as the clear thrusting dialogue, the power of etching memorable scenes in a few thrifty strokes, and the born sense for expanding and proportioning a story,—the church biography shares with the great heroic Sagas. Everywhere, naturally, we find all the defects of the mythological spirit. The sense of evidence, where a marvel is in question, is unborn. Here, as elsewhere, the most sincere and punctilious mind—like that of Einar for instance—is a worthless witness when an omen, a dream, or a judgment upon a sinner tempt it. Perhaps the mission of the Church could only have breathed in this atmosphere of naïve acceptance; at any rate, though the Gospel's true power lay in winning hearts, the marvels of the saints served to fill some of the void left by the departed Asgard. Men's picturing and worshipping instinct had to be fed somehow, and it was centuries before the poetry of normal life could satisfy the hunger; the result being, that chronicles like Einar's must be read in the spirit in which we read, not Thucydides, but Herodotus.

This short translation had the honour of encouragement from the veteran Norse scholar so lately lost, Gudbrand Vigfússon. His own heavy work did not prevent him from generously offering to revise these sheets. But though his death interrupted everything, his edition of the text (published in Copenhagen in 1858), and his Dictionary, practically did half the labour of a version; without these aids, indeed, no version pretending to accuracy could well exist. In any piece of work which he did, every one can feel the hand of the master-scholar; like Casaubon, he cut roads into the jungle of learning, and his roads are Roman.

The translation, in spite of this loss, has had the great advantage of aid from Vigfússon's partner in Scandinavian research, Mr. York Powell, who has spared no pains to improve a work which he originally suggested.







## ERRATA.

Page 4, at bottom of page, *read* 'Then was revealed Mary Magdalen, and set in a shrine at St. Maximin.'

Page 35, margin, *for* 'Dec. 23' *read* 'July 20.'

Page 67, *for* 'seven hundred and twenty' *read* 'seven thousand two hundred.'

Page 73, l. 5, *for* 'Shák' *read* 'Skák.' Last line, *for* 'to Norway' *read* 'to Iceland.'

Page 90, last words of Chap. 43, *read* 'He chanted Mass for the first time on All Saints' Day.'

Page 95, l. 12, *for* 'requiems' *read* 'hours of the dead.'

Page 105, l. 14, *for* 'Flugumýri lent money,' *read* 'leased Flugumýri.'

Page 106, l. 7, *for* 'in' *read* 'on to.'



*THE LIFE OF LAURENCE, BISHOP  
OF HÓLAR.*

WHEN at the helm of God's Church Universal was the Apostolic Father Urban, fourth of his name, and Pope in Rome; and when Lord Hákon, archbishop of Nidarós church, and Jörund Thorsteinsson, bishop of the church of Hólar, were mighty in the northern quarter of Iceland; and when that gracious lord, our lord the King Magnús Hákonarson, ruled in Norway with the temporal rod;—this history, which with God's help we will begin, was first written, to delight and fleet the time of good men, and for knowledge withal and for edifying; concerning Lord Laurence, bishop at Hólar, of excellent memory. He himself admonished me<sup>1</sup> to keep in mind whatsoever he related about the course of his life before he was bishop at Hólar. But his life afterwards was well known to one, who was night and day in his service and lodging while he was bishop in Iceland until he died. Here also much is gathered together, after the notices of the annals that seem best informed, about divers events that befell in divers countries.

gríma, being his nephew's wife, to his home at Vellir. A heaviness came upon her so that she could scarce bear up, and before St. Laurence' Day she fell ill, lay on the floor, and could not be delivered; many prayers were said over her, but there was no change in her for the better. Before mass on St. Laurence' Day Sir Thórarin went in to her, and chanted over her, and by God's grace she bore a man-child; but in this child no man saw a sign of life. Then Sir Thórarin vowed that this boy should be called Laurence, and that if St. Laurence vouchsafed life to this boy, he should all his life after keep a water-fast<sup>4</sup> before St. Laurence' Day, if he had years and health for it. And when this vow had been confirmed and pronounced by Sir Thórarin, a sign of life was straight seen in the boy. Then was the child baptized 'Laurence.' When he grew a mighty man, he kept that vow: and after he became bishop at Hólar, he kept St. Laurence' Day with high festival, doing the prelude in the mass himself, keeping it a day of banquet, and giving much alms on the same.

- 1267 In the birth-year of Laurence these things befell abroad.<sup>5</sup> Hákon, archbishop in Nidarós, and Prince Olaf died. Charles, king in Apulia, went on a crusade to Jerusalem; also Lewis his brother, king of the Franks. Then appeared Mary Magdalen and was set in the shrine of St. Maximin. In the second year of Laurence' life John was consecrated archbishop at Nidarós. Conrad was beaten by King Charles out by Rimini, and fled to Benevento, and was there beheaded. Then died Earl Gizurd, and Sigvard bishop in Skálholt, and Gauti bishop of the Faroe Isles. In the third year
- 1269



of Laurence' life the Icelanders consented to pay tribute to King Magnús. Árni was consecrated bishop to Skálholt, and Erlend to the Faroes. In the fourth year of Laurence' life the Icelanders received laws of King Magnús. King Lewis put a tribute on King Charles. The following kings died of poison which was cast into wells—the Sultan of Tunis, Theobald of Navarre. James went to Jerusalem. Queen Margaret, and Peter, 1271 bishop of Bergen, died. In the fifth year of Laurence' life, Philip was crowned king of the Franks; and Norwegian laws came into Iceland. In the sixth year of Laurence' life there was no Pope for four years running. Clement was the next Pope after Urban. In the seventh year of Laurence' life Gregory, sixth of his name, was made Pope. King Magnús and Valdimar, king of the Swedes, had a conference. Bishop Jörund went to Norway, and Bishop Árni, Rafn, and Thorvard came to Iceland. There were now disputes in the contest<sup>6</sup> over the glebes. Henry, king of the English, died. In the eighth year of Laurence' life Pope Gregory had a council at Lyons and reformed the faith of the Greeks. Then died James, archbishop of Lund in Denmark. Edward, king of the English, was crowned. Archbishop John visited the country; and a piece came of the Crown of Thorns of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was sent to King Magnús from Philip, king of France. In the ninth year of Laurence' life, Eirek, son of Duke Birgi, came from Denmark with a troop and strove with Valdimar his brother, aided by Duke Magnús their brother, and King Valdimar fled into Norway. Then came such mighty hail from heaven on St. Laurence' Eve, in certain spots in the lordship of the Thronds, that the largest hailstones weighed fifteen ounces. 1276 In the tenth year of Laurence' life died Pope Gregory, and Pope Innocent, and Pope Adrian, who was not a priest, but the chief of the cardinals, and called Octobonus. John the Twenty-first was Pope. In Túnberg King Magnús gave the title of Earl to Magnús, son of Magnús, Earl of the Orkneys.

Now while we have been speaking of those matters to begin with, Laurence stayed in turn

with the priest Thórarin his kinsman at Vellir, or else with his father and mother, where they were keeping house; and now he was taught. It was soon manifest that he was eager to learn good.

4. Once at Vellir this befell. The schoolboys were brawling in the church there at Vellir; and it so happened that something Laurence threw hit the image of Our Lady and broke off a leaf of the sceptre she was holding. And when Sir Thórarin came to church at even, the lads told him of Laurence' misdoing; and he was very wroth thereat, and vowed him a sound hiding on the morrow. When Laurence knew that this must be fulfilled even as it was promised him, he betook him for help where there was good store of it; he flung down weeping on the floor before Our Lady's image, prayed for aid from her and forgiveness; and especially that the heart of his kinsman might be softened towards him. Next morning Priest Thórarin called his kinsman Laurence, and asked him whether he had put up any prayer to escape his thrashing. He said he had made one to Mary Queen.

'I doubt as much,' said Sir Thórarin, 'for in the night it was revealed to me that it was Our Lady's will that I should not beat thee for this, but should have thy breakage mended.' This was a sign that his appeals and prayers, which were acceptable in his childish years to God and his sweet Mother, would be much more so afterwards.

When Sir Thórarin was dead and gone, Kálf took it so to heart that he could scarce bear up,

and soon he departed. Money after that was scant and hard to find; and yet Thorgríma and her husband had lived long on the lands of the church at Hólar. Lord Bishop Jörund asked the lad Laurence to his house at Hólar, and put him to book-learning, saying he thought that this lad Laurence would gain much understanding in the lore and learning of books. Year after year went by, so that Laurence waxed in book lore and knowledge, and was best of all the scholars of his years. Sir Óblaud Hallvardsson was schoolmaster there, and he took such a liking to this youth Laurence that he always made him stay in the school and question the other scholars, when he was himself feasting and drinking with Bishop Jörund. (The aforesaid Sir Óblaud was near of kin to the Lord Bishop, and had before then been abroad and much loved by the archbishop in Nidarós; and Lord Bishop Jörund bore much love to Sir Óblaud his kinsman.) Often, when the other scholars were at play or other light-mindedness, there stayed Laurence bettering his mind, studying books, or teaching others. There was much play of malice among the other scholars at this: there, they said, went a bishop-elect; and much fleering and flouting they had at him; but he only went on the further at bettering his mind. His orders proceeded regularly and duly, and the more swiftly, because he was a better scholar than others. And as soon as he was hallowed under Holy Orders, he was appointed at home at Hólar and there was deacon. As soon as Laurence was

twenty-two he was ordained priest by Lord Bishop Jörund, and then he kept school. -He got so toward in scholarly composing of Latin prose and verse that he could make verse as fast as a man could talk Latin.

5. Turn we back again to the events that befell here  
 1277 in the country and elsewhere. In the eleventh year of Laurence died Pope John. King Magnús gave the title of Baron to his liegemen. Hrafn was knighted. King Magnús and Archbishop John made a lasting settlement between Church and Crown, and confirmed it with their hand and seal. In the twelfth year of Laurence, King Magnús demanded a levy to go to the Elfi. Bishops Árni and Jörund were reconciled. The bones of Odd, son of Thórarin, were carried to the church in Skálholt. In the next year after, Bishops Árni and Jörund went abroad. Hrafn came home, and Lodin of Bakki with lawman's powers. Abbot Vermund of Thingeyri died. In the next year, Pope Nicholas died, and also King Magnús Hákonarson. King Eirek was crowned. Bishops Jörund and Árni, Lodin the 'Rag,' and John the lawman with a new code, came home. Bjarni was consecrated abbot to Thingeyri. Next year Martin was consecrated Pope. Lodinn the 'Rag's' journey to Norway took place. Eirek, king of Norway, took Queen Margaret, daughter of Alexander, king of Scotland, to wife. Moreover in the next year the houses in Nidarós were burnt. Lord Archbishop John died out east in Skarir, having been exiled from Norway in the  
 1283 same year. In the next year after Lord Hrafn and Lord Lawman Erlend came to Iceland and raised claim to the demesnes<sup>6</sup> in Iceland. Then a great plague overran Iceland. Also next year quarrelling arose between Hrafn on one side, and Bishop Árni and those who were appointed to livings, on the other. Stock perished, and many men died of famine in Iceland, and there was desolation of many homesteads. Also next year, the title of Earl was given to Lord Alf and to Audun 'Oats'.

Also next year King Eirek sent Sir Gudmund Hallsson to Iceland to demand men for a levy.



This same Gudmund came to Iceland with the vestments which King Eirek had given to St. John, bishop of Hólar. It came to pass that King Eirek was on his way to a council of kings and could not get a wind. Prayers were made to many saints, but it was granted none the more. Then came Sir Gudmund to the king, saying:—

‘Pray, Sire, to John, bishop of Hólar; he is very swift to hearken to prayers; and offer him your best robes of rich stuff.’

‘Thus shall it be done, Sir Priest,’ said the king, ‘and let him show he is no sluggard, as Icelanders commonly are.’

Then the calm ended. Straightway Sir Gudmund bade them hoist sail, and forthwith a fair and good wind came blowing: and the king in four days reached the harbour he had chosen, and he honoured St. John, bishop of Hólar, ever after. And dalmatics were made of the clothes at Hólar. Also in the next year came Jörund, archbishop-elect to Nidarós. Hallkell ‘Crow-dance’ was put to death. Álf was exiled and outlawed; and also Queen Ingibjörg died.

6. Next year Bishop Jörund and Lord Thorvard came to Iceland. Laurence, as we said before, was now ordained priest; and he was now twenty-two. Here he was priest for 1288 three years and also schoolmaster. When Laurence was twenty-five, Bishop Jörund gave him a benefice up north at Háls in Fnjóska-dale. He was a year there, and then gave up the living because he had ill luck with his stock in his



housekeeping : he was then shifted back to Hólar. In the second year of Sir Laurence' priesthood, it came to pass that King Eirek sent Hrólf to Iceland on a search for the New World. Bishop Jörund of Hólar went over the diocese of Bishop Árni to reclaim glebes for the Church, by the counsel of Archbishop Jörund. In the

1290 year following Bishop Jörund went abroad and stayed two years in Norway ; during this time Sir Halldór Grimsson was official over Hólar See, and Sir Haflidi Steinsson was steward at Hólar. Sir Haflidi was the best of overseers for all secular counsel ; he had before this been to Norway, and was chaplain for some years of King Eirek and the queen. Laurence and Sir Haflidi became most friendly and companionable together ; often afterwards Laurence testified that he had been a most trusty friend to him. In the third year of Laurence' priesthood, Hrólf wanted men in Iceland for a voyage to the New World. Then arose dispute between Archbishop Jörund and the canons in Nidarós. In

the following year was the voyage home  
1292 of Lord Bishop Jörund, and Bishop Árni, of Lord Thórd of Christopher, and many others with writs from the king. Then began a fresh contest over the glebes.<sup>6</sup> Sigurd was told to quit Hlíd, at Mödruvellir, in the Hörg Valley, and he thought himself entitled, by inheritance, to keep his land. This displeased Bishop Jörund, who gave him many admonitions ; and yet he budged from his estate not a whit the more. And

it came to this, that he was ready to excommunicate him. Then he bade Sir Laurence go north to Mödruvellir with a letter of excommunication which he was to announce before Sigurd, if he refused to quit. Laurence took this journey so sadly that he went with one man north over the Pass of Hédinn, got to Mödruvellir, and talked to yeoman Sigurd declaring to him that if he would not obey and come to terms, heavy affliction would befall him. Sigurd took Laurence's words heavily, saying that it was nought to him what he said. Then, next day, when high festival came on, Sir Laurence read the Bishop's writ at mass after Gospel, so loud and clear that Sigurd heard, and all who were in the church. And this was the tenor of the writ: Bishop Jörund laid the ban on Sigurd and barred him from communication with Christian men. From Sigurd and his men Laurence got many revilings and threatenings, and such array was made against him that it was hardly safe for him to leave the church.

Then straightway yeoman Sigurd departed and went west to Hólar with much company. At first Sigurd said bitterly that it misbeseemed the bishop to bear so hard on the king's lieges. And he asked, Did the bishop own that he had bidden Laurence proceed thus? But the bishop said that Laurence had not acted in the way he had bidden him. The end was that Sigurd and the bishop made a bargain: the bishop paying a sum to Sigurd, while church and bishop were to have freehold of the living for ever.<sup>7</sup> Then Sir Laurence

came back, Sigurd having ridden off from Hólar. And from this journey Laurence earned but labour and trouble; from Sigurd spitefulness and hate, and small cheer from the bishop. This was the root of the estrangement between Bishop Jörund and Laurence; for Laurence thought that he had received a great rebuff for the mission which he deemed he had done faithfully. And he desired much to leave Iceland, because he thought he would get little cordiality from Bishop Jörund: also many of the bishop's kin were very short with him.

7. Next summer, after 'Flitting-days,'<sup>8</sup> Lord Peter came to Iceland from Eidi-at-Knerri. All the northern quarter was appointed to  
 1293 him by the king for his province. Lord Bishop Jörund invited him to Hólar, and there he stayed the winter. Sir Laurence and Lord Peter came to feel fast friends. Laurence took counsel with himself and travelled with him in the summer, and talked and questioned with him of many matters entertainingly. Once Laurence asked Lord Peter how men looked or bore themselves when the sea was bad. 'Various,' said Peter, 'I tell thee no more about it this time.' In the summer after, Sir  
 1294 Laurence rode south into Skálholt. It is notable that Lord Bishop Árni Thorláksson, who was in authority there, welcomed Laurence so signally that he made him sit next to him. Many marvelled that he gave to a poor cleric a seat higher than distinguished people.

But the bishop said that some day it would come to his not having the lowest seat; also he said it was not wrong to set high those who had the better wits. Afterwards the lord bishop called Laurence into his study and set out before him a lectern and upon it a book of the Canon Law, telling him to amuse himself with it. Then said Laurence to the bishop:—

‘My good Lord, God requite you for your condescension which you show to me, so poor, so nameless.’

The bishop answered: ‘If thou hast not yet fully comprehended the Canon Law, that must be thy business henceforth. Also, thou shalt come to endure many tribulations ere thy days be done.’

Laurence used to say that he had seen the face of a saint on two men only; on Bishop Árni Thorláksson, and on Bjarni abbot of Thingeyri. Bishop Árni and Laurence parted cordially. That same summer Laurence embarked for Norway at Gáseyri with the aforesaid 1294 Lord Peter, leave being first obtained from Bishop Jörund. When they got on the sea, Laurence was in great distress from sea-sickness. Then came Lord Peter to him and said, fleeing:—

‘Priest, in the winter at Hólar, thou askedst me what figure people cut when the sea was bad; and now I will answer all thy questions; even as pale and peaked as thou art, Sir Laurence.’

Laurence had now double pangs—from Lord Peter’s flouting and also from the sea-sickness. They got a fair wind and reached Norway safe



and sound. It befell in that year that there was a great earthquake in Iceland in the March 12, south, before St. Gregory's Day, so that 1294 in some places houses fell down. There was strife in Rome, and people slain in St. Peter's.

8. Now we must go on to tell how Lord Peter and Sir Laurence came to Norway. King Eirek was then sojourning in Bergen. The king received Lord Peter most blithely, for he was a dear friend of the king's. Lord Peter broached his suit towards a certain woman of the king's kindred, who lived east in Vik; he entreated that the king would write to her. The king bade Lord Peter have a letter written in Latin and told him he would give him his seal on it. Then Lord Peter called Laurence to him and bade him compose this letter in the best Latin he knew. Sir Laurence tried to shirk it, and said he was not skilled enough for this. 'But,' he said, 'though I have little skill to do this, yet am I bound to do what you will.' Next day he showed Lord Peter the letter, written in Latin. Then Lord Peter went to the king with the letter and showed it him. The king praised the handwriting and style of the letter much, and then asked who had done it. Peter answered him that a certain Icelandic priest had done it, whom he had brought from Iceland. The king bade him tell that priest to be at his banquet for that day. Even so Laurence did, and it was arranged he should sit above the other guests, and for that day the king ate and



drank to him. The next day a page of the king came to Sir Laurence and told him that the king summoned him. He went to the king in his public hall and gave him good-day. The king received him cheerily, and asked whether he was the priest who had written Lord Peter's Latin letter; and he said that it was so. The king offered him to wait upon his service. Sir Laurence thanked the king for his offer, and said that he had leave of absence for his pilgrimage to St. Ólaf in Nidarós.

'Come to us,' said the king, 'when thou returnest, and be at our banquet for Yule and all high-days, and whensoever thou wilt.' Also throughout the winter he was in the hall with the king, but sometimes at Lord Peter's charges. There were there with King Eirek many mighty men from divers countries and skilled in many matters. Among them was a man named Thránd 'Cracker,' who knew of many clever tricks, but more by his mother-wit than by any manner of sorcery; he was Flemish by race. Sir Laurence struck up a friendship with this man, and talked about many things to him, for while he was young he went much after laying up of knowledge, and yet he never dealt in sorcery or heathen witchcraft. In Yule Thránd 'Cracker' let off the war-crack; it comes so loud that very few men could bear to hear it, women with child fall in labour when they hear it, and men fall down out of their seats on the floor, or are troubled otherwise. Thránd told Laurence that he should put his fingers in his ears when the crack came. Many men could not

stand it in the hall when he made the crack. Thránd explained to Laurence what it was needful to have to make the crack, namely four things : fire, brimstone, parchment, and tow. Now men often use this war-crack in battle, to the end that they who are not used to it may fly all ways.

9. Next spring Laurence went north to Throndhjem where Archbishop Jörund abode: between him and the Chapter there was much dissension. Archbishop Jörund was a great lord, a good scholar, a firm friend, very bountiful to his people,  
1295 and the comeliest of men to look upon.

A little before, a great scholar, John the Fleming, had come there. He had abode long in Paris and Orleans, studying, and was so great a lawyer that there in Norway there was none like him, and in this way the archbishop found him a pillar of strength when he was there; for all the foremost of the Chapter were his adversaries. They were constantly appealing to the Pope, and got a number of rescripts from the Curia to burden the archbishop. So the archbishop was very glad to find a scholar wherever he could. John the Fleming was a good mediator for the archbishop in his disputes with the Chapter, because he could not speak any Norse, and the people could not understand his speech; for he spoke all in Latin, French, or Flemish. At this time Sir Laurence came to Throndhjem begging leave to speak with Archbishop Jörund, and when this was got, he showed him the permit from Bishop Jörund at Hólar,

declaring that he gave Sir Laurence leave to stay with the archbishop as long as he liked to have him by him.

Hereat the archbishop was very glad and spoke thus: 'Many thanks give we to Bishop Jörund because he sent thee to us; thou shalt be welcome among us in the Lord; but come to us on the morrow and show us thy handwriting, and whether thou canst compose aught in Latin.'

Next day came Sir Laurence to the archbishop, holding a scroll. The archbishop looked at it, and praised the writing and said, 'Read before us that which thou hast written.'

He read from it the verses which he had made upon Lady Hallbera, abbess at Stad.

'Is she a good woman,' said the archbishop, 'since thou hast praised her so much?'

'People in Iceland,' said Laurence, 'count that for certain.'

'Cease verse-making henceforward,' said the archbishop, 'and study rather in the Canon Law. Knowest thou not that *Versificatura nihil est nisi falsa figura?*'

'You must also know,' said Laurence, 'that *Versificatura nihil est nisi maxima cura.*'

Then the archbishop had John the Fleming summoned, and said to him, 'We give this man Sir Laurence into your charge, and bid you take all pains in teaching him the Canon Law. We will give you good guerdon for that.—But why do you wear red clothes,' he said to Sir Laurence, 'which it is forbidden to clergy to wear?'

He said, 'Because I have no others.'

Then he whispered to one of his pages, who went away and came in a little after with fine brown clothes, which the archbishop had worn himself. Then he said to Laurence, 'Wear these clothes on high days ; but get from the Steward at our manor money to buy you black clothing to wear every day : but give these red clothes to your page. Sit at table on the Steward's bench by John the Fleming.'

10. Now to tell how Sir Laurence, after coming to Archbishop Jörund, went daily to study to learn Canon Law, and how sometimes the archbishop sent him to declare his bidding in the quarrels of the Chapter, which were then going forward. Quickly Laurence became best beloved by the archbishop, because he seemed to him shrewd and well-counselled, firm, and quick in argument. Next winter, in Lent, on *Laetare Jerusalem* Sunday, the archbishop had Laurence summoned into his chapel at mass.

'Forasmuch as,' he said, 'this Sunday is notable, we will give you Ólaf's church here in the town, for it is now free.'

Laurence thanked him for all the good treatment he had vouchsafed him. This is a token what love the archbishop had towards him, that he took thought of himself and unasked to give him a church which many men wanted.

1294 In this year, spoken of already, Adrian the Hermit was consecrated Pope on the day of the Holy Ghost, and called Celestinus. There were standing by him ten lepers, and by God's mercy they were all cleansed utterly. Celestinus did not last quite till St. John's Eve, and gave



up the Popedom, going back to his hermitage. Then one of the Cardinals Benedict was chosen and consecrated, and called Boniface. Eirek, king of the Danes, and Dukē Christopher took the Archbishop of  
 1295 Lund and put him in a dungeon. Denmark was under interdict. Bishop Jörund of Hólar founded a cloister of canons at Mödruvellir, in the Vale of Hörg. Then died Ljótr, abbot at Múnka-Thverá. Then was the great drift of whales in the North of Iceland. At this time Bishop Jörund also founded a nunnery at Stad in Reynisnes. Next year Bishop Jörund made Teit prior  
 1320 at Mödruvellir. A great plague of boils ran over Iceland; and twelve yeomen in Skálholt See confirmed Church-property by oath.

11. Now we must go on to tell how Laurence was with Archbishop Jörund in Nidarós and studied continually in the Canon Law which Master John the Fleming taught 1296-8 him. Also they were great friends one to another. It seemed great sport to Laurence when John made struggles to talk Norse, but got a very little way with it.

Once John the Fleming said to Laurence; 'I would thou wouldst intercede with my Lord that he should present me to the living of the church of Mary here in the town, for it is now empty.'

Laurence answered, 'How should that be, when you do not know how to speak any Norse?'

'I know,' said John, 'as much as I want, and as lies upon my mind to speak.'

'Now,' said Laurence, 'let us then suppose that the beginning of the long fast<sup>9</sup> is come. It is then your business to declare before your parish folk how they are to keep the long fast.'



‘In this wise,’ said John the Fleming. ‘Now *Lent* is come: every Christian man come to church: get him shaven: put away his wife: make no brawling. *Nonne sufficit domine?*’

Then Laurence laughed and said, ‘The people understands not what *Lent* is.’

He told the archbishop, and they had great sport thereat. But they granted unto John some portion of his request, because he was very quick of temper if things were not done as he liked.

12. Once a great company of passengers for Iceland came to Throndhjem, and there were many Icelanders among them. Sir Laurence wished to do some service to each and all of them. Among the rest came the man called Klaeng the ‘Caster,’ a kinsman of Laurence and intimate with him.

And when John the Fleming saw that, he wanted to pay some attention to him, and once spoke to Laurence in Latin, and said, ‘Teach me how to greet this companion of yours in Norse.’

Laurence thought he would have a great jest with John and said, ‘Thus greet him: *Small welcome, fellow!*’\*

‘I understand,’ said John: ‘this must be a fair greeting, because *fögnudr* means *gaudium*, and *laus* ‘praise.’† Afterwards he went up to Klaeng the Caster, clapped him on the shoulders and said, ‘Small welcome, fellow!’

The other sharpened his looks at him, and he

\* ‘*Fagnad arlaus, kompán!*’

† He mixes Latin *laus* with Norse *laus*, ‘less.’

thought the greeting could not be so fair as he had supposed.

Then said John the Fleming to Laurence, 'Now I understand that thou hast mocked me, for this man was wroth with me.'

John the Fleming had a mistress so hideous and loathsome that there could scarcely be found a more monstrous aspect than she wore. Sir Laurence once asked Master John wherefore he would keep so very hideous a woman in his company. John answered, 'I am a hot-tempered man, and I should not take it well if any one were to fool my serving-woman away from me, and therefore I took this one because I know that no man wants her.'

13. It is said that now the discussion of Archbishop Jörund and the Chapter waxed so that it broke into open hatred. His chief adversaries were Sighvat the Landsman, and Sir Eilif, afterwards archbishop in Nidarós, and Sir Audun the Red, afterwards bishop at Hólar in Iceland. They appealed to Pope Boniface: the end was that Archbishop Jörund was summoned to the Pope, so he went out of the country to Paris; where he took ill, and went no further. Thence he sent a message to the Pope and then got back his credit. He was away there one year and then came back to Nidarós. During that time Laurence was in Nidarós and had St. Ólaf's Church, as we told before. He was glad when the archbishop came back home, for he then appointed Sir Laurence in charge over the offering which was made to Ólaf, saint and king, and

also to be penitentiary. Then the archbishop paid even more regard to him than before, because he seemed to him to have gone on deftly about his business and his church in his own absence.

In that year Bishop Árni Thorláksson departed ; and he was buried at Múnlíf in Bergen. In the next year died King Eirek Magnússon  
1299 on the 10th of July. The title of king was given to Hákon his brother, who was crowned with the hallowing of a king in Throndhjem by Archbishop Jörund. Thither now came all the first men in Norway and from other lands far and wide. There could be seen the greatest throng ever known in the Northern lands. No man might go out from Eyri and on to Christ Church except with eider-down robes, costly stuff, and canopy. King Hákon gave a magnificent feast and also many privileges and amended laws to the Holy Church. King Hákon reconciled the Archbishop and the Chapter. But it lasted only a while, for the moment that King Hákon was out of the town, the same quarrelling and wrangling arose between them as of old. So things stayed for a year. Then the archbishop proceeded against them with admonitions, and they would not obey. In league with them now went all the people of the town, all the school, and the abbot from Hólm. The end was that no lettered man dared or would execute any bidding of the archbishop's which the Chapter were against.

14. One day the archbishop summoned Laurence and said, 'Here is a writ which John the Fleming has made by our bidding. This writ thou art to read out against the Chapter in Christ Church to-morrow morning, because that is a day of most high festival.'

Laurence answers, '*Mighty is the master's word*; I must do and forward whatever is your will while I am in your service. But I know that, little as the Chapter have loved me hitherto, now it will be yet worse.'

Accordingly on the morrow at high mass, when the Chapter were in the chancel, and when it was least expected, Sir Laurence rose up in the choir, according to the bidding of the archbishop, and read the writ:—*Rumor pestiferus!* . . . This was the drift of the writ, that for many and mighty reasons which he named, he laid a ban on the Canons Eilif, Audun the Red, Sighvat the Landsman, saying also that if they did not quit, the service of mass was to cease. Laurence read so loudly and well that they heard clearly.

Then answered Sighvat the Landsman, saying, 'No need, Iclander, to bellow so loud, we hear what thou sayest.' They all went home each to his lodging. From that day forth Sir Laurence could never go out without danger from the Chapter.

This year it befell in Iceland that fire came up from Mount Hekla<sup>10a</sup> so violently that the mountain was cloven, which will be there to see while Iceland is dwelt <sup>1300</sup> in. In this fire great stones whirled wildly



about like coal in hardness, so that, when they drove together, the cracks were so great that it was heard over the country northwards and far and wide elsewhere. Thence came so much lava, smiting on a farm in Naefraholt, that the thatch was burnt off the buildings. A wind came from the south-west which carried sand over the country between Vatn Pass and the Heath of Öxar Firth so thickly with so mighty a darkness, that no man, in doors or out, knew whether it was night or day, until the sand fell to earth in a shower, and all the earth was hid for the sand. On the next day the sand drifted, so that here and there men could scarce grope their way. All these two days no man durst row on the sea, because of the darkness over the north country. This befell on the 13th of July. At the same time a fire burst up in Sicily and two  
Dec. 31 dioceses were burnt. Likewise on the sixth night of Yule, such a great earthquake came over the south country that the land shook far and wide. A homestead fell in East Skard; in the church there was a great brazen caldron fixed against the ledge of the beam of the church: it smote with the shock so hard against the church roof that the caldron broke. Two chests stood in the porch in Naefraholt, and they were clashed by the earthquake together so mightily that both were brayed into fine powder. And all the chronicles witness that thirteen hundred years had gone by from the coming upon earth of our Lord Jesus Christ until that day.



15. Now to take up the story. Many ambushes were laid for Sir Laurence. Once it came to pass that the clerks leapt upon him and desired to take him; and when he saw it, he took to his heels and sped up to Christ Church and got hold of the ring of the church door.<sup>10</sup> Then they sped after him; then all at once they tore off his gown, and meant to gripe him away from the church; and then the archbishop's lads came to help him, for he called out for their aid. Also it befell once that a great lady in the place, in the parish of St. Ólaf's Church, died; requiems were sung according to wont, and there was torch and taper. Sir Laurence with his fellows sang the requiems. Then came many scholars all at once and laid hands on the waxen torches and tapers: they were the stronger, and he had no power of defending himself. On the morrow the archbishop sent his lads, so that he got the masses sung and the body lowered. So many offences and mockeries and rebuffs did Sir Laurence endure, ever after he read the aforesaid writ before the Chapter, at the hands of the scholars and of all their train, that the tale were long to tell.

Now to tell how Archbishop Jörund was high in the graces of Lord Hákon the king; to whom wrote the archbishop, showing what affliction and disquiet the Chapter brought upon him, and begging that he would come himself and chastise them with royal authority. And Lord Hákon the king did so; he came to Thronthjem with a crowd both of the clergy and laity, and appointed a

moot,<sup>11</sup> summoning thither the archbishop and all the canons, his adversaries, and all the great men of the town. The moot was held in the summer-palace. There was with King Hákon a great doctor called Áki who had been studying abroad, a leading and eloquent scholar, and he was retained to speak on the king's behalf. A reading-desk was set before him : he stood out before the king's daïs. The order was this ; the king and the archbishop sat together, and out in line from the king the knights and chief men of the kingdom, and out in line from the archbishop the suffragans and abbots, and beyond them the Chapter. On the floor sat priests and common folk. And there among the other companions of the archbishop was Sir Laurence. Lord Áki, calling with a loud voice, gave the signal for the people to hearken. First he set to making an eloquent speech in Latin, telling how it befitted princes both in temporal authority and spiritual to have pre-eminence : this speech of his lasted long. Then he translated his speech and delivered it in clear and eloquent Norse ; keeping to the theme how it was meet for meaner men to do homage to their betters, not merely towards the good and righteous, but equally towards such as are tainted in their walk ; as Paul the apostle saith, declaring how heavy an iniquity it is for a man to conspire against his superiors, and making it as grievous as idolatry. Then he went on to speak more boldly, saying plainly into what abomination the Chapter had fallen in working adversely to their lord arch-

bishop : saying plainly also, that they might suffer in their skins, and that the secular arm could rightfully fall on them with the king's sword and authority. And so sharp and loudly this man spoke that many of the Chapter and their retainers shivered in their shirts.

16. After Lord Áki's speech, King Hákon stood up and spoke in Latin and in Norse ; and the end of it was that he gave them a hard choice ;—either those canons who had been declared under the ban by the archbishop were to be outlawed from Norway and all his dominion, they and all their followers, or else they must fall down on the spot before the archbishop and submit all their case to his power by the counsel of the king and the chief men ; and yet if they did not there and then do the king's bidding, they should by no means now quit that chamber unscathed. Now, when the canons saw what a great peril was between them and the door, they straightway stood up and fell down before the archbishop and submitted all their case unto his will. Next day the covenant between the archbishop and the Chapter was declared. Each made a covenant of peace and quietness with the other and the other's men : which covenant was most loyally kept for two years, and Sir Laurence was now in peace and quietness and well entertained by Archbishop Jörund ; he was also penitentiary, and appointed to the charge of the offering to St. Ólaf.

We would not pass by declaring and expounding what befell abroad during these years. It is said that

1301 a rich prince fought in Rome herself, but afterwards made peace with Pope Boniface, taking his niece to wife. And the Lord Pope went so far for the peace of holy Church that he himself solemnised their marriage, and gave dispensation to eat meat on Palm Sunday, but he forbade any man doing it at his pleasure. That year died Chancellor Bárd : Lord Álf of Krók came out, and two quarters of Iceland were appointed unto him, the North and East. Then came out to Iceland Lodin, the lawman, with a writ from the king. In the next year following Audun 'Oats' was hanged, and Margaret, who boasted she was King Eirek's daughter, and her husband were burned. A comet was seen about Michaelmas time, by traders on the sea, and it seemed to them greater and dimmer than other stars, and had a tail like a plummet, and every evening that they saw it, it went tail foremost from the north-east northwards. Also in the South country a comet was seen for half a month on winter nights : also in Bergen towards Lent, and in Rome before Easter. Lord Bishop Jörund, at Hólar, instituted chanting at the new church which he had had built at Mödruvellir in the Hörg Valley, Krók Álf came to Norway and told King Hákon of many changes in Iceland. In that following year above 1304 spoken of Pope Boniface died ; Benedict was consecrated Pope, and Arni Helgason also was consecrated bishop to Skálholt. Thurid, daughter of Árni of Burgundy, bore a boy to Sir Laurence, called Arni ; the same woman afterwards bore a boy to Sir Solomon, called Bárd. In the next year died Pope Benedict, and Clement was consecrated in his stead.

17. Then came from Norway to Iceland Álf Krók with many writs from the king and novellae,<sup>12</sup> with these he went over the country and named many good yeoman outlaws. At Hegranness moot and also at Oddeyri moot the people rushed at him. At Hegranness moot he was so scared that he hardly knew where to turn for refuge : the vagabond beggars, whooping and hollaing, smote their shields against him ; he was only saved from



slaughter at their hands by Lord Thórd from Möðruvellir and other lords having him covered by their shields. There was a fellow called Berg the 'Wren,' a yeoman, and a fat-headed fool; he was also the most forward of all the freedmen in harrying Álf at Hegraness moot. And when Lord Jörund was billeted at Hof in Höfdaströnd, and was at table in the evening, into the room burst the aforesaid Berg the Wren, and flung himself down before the bishop's feet, saying, 'Utterly in God's hand and yours, lord bishop!'

Bishop Jörund asked, 'What is the matter, Berg?'

'I have fallen into a lamentable sin,' said Berg; 'to-day, at Hegraness Thing, I slew Krók-Álf.'

Then asked the bishop, 'How didst thou attack Álf?'

'My Lord, I thrust Álf through with a spear: now I offer myself to whatsoever penance it is thy will to put upon me.'

'Berg, get up,' said the bishop. 'Berg, thou hast seen wrong; for Krók-Álf thou hast not slain, and he yet lives. Go to the table and eat; I will not shun commerce with thee: thou art no man-slayer.'

'Will that be better known to thee than me, bishop? nay, for the trouble has grown yet greater notwithstanding; I slew yet another man.' So said Berg.

'Hold thy peace,' said the bishop, 'and lie not like a fool about thyself. For people already know that thou art none too valiant, and art not tried in

fight and fray ; nay, we deem thee more of a coward than any man, when manly prowess is wanted.'

Now, when the bishop and Berg had thus parleyed, people came into the room who had been at the moot during the day, and told that Álf was alive and journeying to Lord Thórd, and meant to go north over the waste. And the moment that Berg saw the people coming into the room, he took to his heels and flew to the church; and into the chancel, and under the hangings, and there he skulked till the bishop came to the church, and by talking got enough pith into Berg to make him go away with the rest. Ever after, Berg seemed a worse fool than before ; everything Bishop Jörund had said proved right ; for it was truly said about him that he was shrewder about everything and clearer-witted than any one else in Iceland during his days upon earth. Krók-Álf went north into Dynhagi and stayed there through the winter, over Yule. Then he took a sickness and died of it, and lies at Mödruvellir in the Vale of Hórg. It was told to King Hákon that Icelanders had slain Álf ; but there were many to gainsay this on oath.

18. Now to take up the story : Sir Laurence was in Throndhjem, in Nidarós, well entertained, as we said before, by Archbishop Jörund ; but many felt great envy at the eminence which the archbishop gave him. One day it happened that the archbishop was holding a Chapter with the canons and the other chief clergy that were then with him. They declared, before the

archbishop, that it was meet for him to send a visitor out to Iceland; and proclaiming that the fittest man for that was Sir Laurence, because he was a good scholar and an Icelander born. With this declaration the archbishop agreed, and called Sir Laurence up, declaring that his will was to send him to Iceland for a visitation with authority from the archbishop. He bade him come again next day, which he did. Then the archbishop said the like to Laurence, that his will was to send him to Iceland. And thus Laurence answered the archbishop's words :

‘My Lord, you know well that I do all your will gladly; but I know my own infirmity for all such matters, and especially that I have small practice in preaching God's message before the people; and if you desire that I adventure on this service, send with me some preacher to hold forth before the people. I have even spoken with brother Björn of the preacher's order; he is willing to go with me if you consent; only, it must be so as to share my power fairly with me, and to be in equal authority with me.’

Then said Lord Archbishop Jörund, ‘Thou seest this thing not so clearly, Sir Laurence, as were meet for thy own edification; but thou knowest this well, how our Lord saith: *omne regnum in se divisum desolabitur*; yea, it often happens that a kingdom divided against itself shall be swiftly desolate; and there is seldom agreement of one man with another: also discernment will, in this matter, be given unto thee, so that thou

will repent greatly of taking a preaching-brother into thy company : for such are ever ill to trust in law-suits and in all other fellowship.'

Then the canons held to it—more for malice towards Laurence than for sound counsel—that he should never be suffered to take brother Björn with him. Then the plan was settled, that brother Björn and Sir Laurence were appointed visitors to Iceland with equal powers ; yet the archbishop was much more close and affectionate with Sir Laurence than with brother Björn, but both of them took the strongest letters of authority for their mission. The archbishop showed what love he bore to Sir Laurence, inasmuch as he gave him, with his seal patent, three parchments—the nature of such letters is, that there must be a seal on them, but nought written ; then he, to whom they are given out, is to write in them what he likes ; swearing first an oath not to write on them aught to the hurt of him who issues them, or to his Church. And this oath Sir Laurence swore, and it was sealed duly, two trusty men of the archbishop's being by. Also the archbishop wrote warm letters out to Bishops Jörund and Árni, saying that they should show goodwill to the visitors aforesaid and support, as far as their own authority went. Then their visitors got on board a ship on its way to Iceland, and took leave of the archbishop cordially.

19. Now to tell how the visitors put to sea, had a fair voyage, landed at Eyri, in the south country, rode up into Skálholt, and were nobly welcomed



by Bishop Árni. He bade them stay as long as they had a mind, and gladly they accepted. And when, in summer, the next day before St. Thorlák's Day came, thus said Laurence to brother Björn, 'Now in Skálholt is a great congregation from over all Iceland, and thou, brother Björn, must ponder over thy morrow's sermon, and especially upon the glory of Thorlák, bishop and saint, for that is now most meet.'

Then brother Björn answered, 'Strange folk all ye Icelanders are, calling many men who have grown up here among you *saints*, while in other countries men know nothing of them. Thus it is high presumption in you Icelanders to reckon a man a saint whom the archbishop in Nidarós has no cognisance of; nay, to-night, when the clergy think of going to evensong, I must rise up in the chancel, and forbid the bishop and all the clergy to sing of this Thorlák, until he is legally acknowledged by our lord archbishop and all the bishops in the province of the church of Nidarós. And I desire thou wilt do likewise, having power equal with mine.'

'Peace, peace,' said Laurence, 'and let this foolishness go no further, for all men, both here in the land and far and wide beyond it, know that the Bishop St. Thorlák is a saint in truth, and did many mighty miracles, and yet doeth; and he will surely punish thee if thou dost not make thy peace with God and this blessed bishop.'

The end of their talk was that each held to his own way of thinking. Brother Björn called his

cook and bade him cook meat for him in Skálholt, the day before St. Thorlák's Day, which seemed passing strange. At evening the bell rang to keep holiday, and when it was come to the time for evensong, a man came in haste to Laurence, saying that brother Björn entreated him to come speedily. He went into the room where brother Björn lay, and saw him lying on his bed, groaning with sick sobs.<sup>13</sup>

Then said brother Björn to Laurence, 'Friend, what shall I do? I am fallen on so heavy an affliction that something goes through my heart, so that I think it most likely, if this go on a while, I shall die speedily.'

'Small wonder is it,' said Laurence, 'though this befall thee, for thou spokest very foolishly in the morning, in misdoubting the sainthood of this goodly servant of God, the sainted Bishop Thorlák, who manifests many good miracles, and as men know that he is merciful unto them that call upon him, so is he very vengeful to them that trespass against him. Thus a certain fool in England was disposed to think that he would bring shame and gibing upon the Bishop St. Thorlák. He took a sausage of sheep's fat and carried it before the image of Bishop Thorlák, saying, "Have it, Fat-lander? Thou hast come abroad from Iceland." This gibe was avenged so swiftly that the hand which held up the lard sausage became stiff like wood; and there he had to stand where he was, with his hand on high, until pious men prayed for him, and he repented him of his abomination; then he got free.'

‘Gladly,’ said brother Björn, ‘will I repent, and will consent to believe every word said henceforth about his glory and sanctity, if he will only mend my malady and take it away: may God grant this at his intercession! Also on the morrow I will preach before the good people of his laudable life and miracles.’

And when he had thus confessed, straightway came a riddance of all his sickness, so that he stood up whole and preached finely on the morrow before the people concerning Bishop Thorlák, telling clearly and bravely what had befallen him. From this event the Bishop St. Thorlák got glory, renown, and honour in everything, even as he is worthy.<sup>14</sup>

After St. Thorlák’s Day, the visitors made their visitation, over the Southern and Western quarters first. Sir Laurence looked hard after the performance of service by priests of Dec. 23 small lore and knowledge; many of whom proved of light learning, and among them a priest called Eilíf in Gufa-dale in the Western quarter. At mass and lessons the visitors examined him, and the issue was that he knew hardly a thing in either of these matters.

Then said Laurence, ‘Let us examine him in the canticle *Audite*,’ and they did so; and he had no sure knowledge of how to read *Audite*.<sup>15</sup>

Priest Eilif said, ‘I can do nothing with it, if ye examine me in the hardest thing ye can find.’

‘Thou hast seldom read the *feriales liturgiae*,’ said Laurence, ‘that is easy to see.’

The visitors took away from Priest Eilíf the mass and all the priest’s service, until he should know it,

or till he learnt enough to make him fit to officiate. There were also some more priests from whom they took, because of their ignorance, the right of saying mass. In the summer they visited the See of Skálholt and went to all the cloisters and larger churches ; and in the Skálholt See they were not withstood, for Lord Bishop Árni was  
1307 a lowly man of gentle bearing. In that summer Lord Bárd came to Iceland with writs and amendments from the king.

20. Now to tell how when the visitors had gone over the See of Skálholt, they rode to Hólar and met Lord Bishop Jörund. He received them both civilly, but brother Björn far more cordially : Laurence soon found that Lord Bishop Jörund invited brother Björn to stay the winter there ; but no invitation came to Laurence. Brother Björn accepted the bishop's invitation and stayed the winter at Hólar. Sir Laurence went north over the fell and parted from Bishop Jörund coldly. The bishop's kin did nothing but scoff and jeer at him, casting in his teeth the old days when Bishop Jörund took him up a beggar, and had him taught ; 'and now he claimed to have authority over him, and power, by the archbishop's ordinance, to depose him from his episcopal sway.' Many despicable fellows carried a pack of lies between them. Laurence went to Eyja Firth, and Lord Thórd invited him to stay the winter with him ; he accepted, and stayed the winter there with one lad. Lord Abbot Thórir was then at Múnka-Thverá.



21. In the spring before it had befallen that Solveig, the daughter of Lopt, wife of Thorvald Geirsson, then dwelling in Long Slope in the Hörg Valley, went to Baegis Water to service on the eve of Maundy Thursday, and one woman with her. As they both went on, it happened that they went down into the Hörg river and were both drowned. The body of goodwife Solveig was found afterwards, and later Thorvald Geirsson took his wife's body to Múnka-Thverá and gave thereafter much offering with the corpse; but she had a right of burial at Baegis Water, where then dwelt the priest called Hildibrand Grímsson. There had been no love lost between Sir Hildibrand and Thorvald; likewise there was a coolness between Solveig and the wife of Thorvald: the priest was for ever comforting Solveig with holy counsel. It was much treasure which Thorvald gave to Múnka-Thverá as an offering for her soul; but to Baegis Water he merely gave twelve ells for a burial-fee. Then in spring Sir Hildibrand complained to Bishop Jörund, but it came to nothing. Afterwards Sir Hildibrand came to Sir Laurence at Mödruvellir in Eyja Firth, and complained to him that he thought he had a claim to the offering and the burial-service; also that her body had a right to burial in the churchyard at Baegis Water; moreover her own will and testament did not declare that she had chosen burial anywhere else save at her own parish church in Baegis Water. Laurence wrote a letter to Thorvald admonishing him to dispose the

body to be taken back to Baegis Water, or else come to an agreement with the priest and dispose fittingly with the church by a gift for her soul, while her body, with Sir Hildibrand's leave, should have free burial in Múnka-Thverá. Thorvald took this letter coldly, professing that he cared nothing for what he said, but meant to have the decision of Bishop Jörund. Afterwards Hildibrand went to Múnka-Thverá and claimed the body, demanding it back for that place of burial which was its due; afterwards he entreated the visitors to hear the case and give him his rights.

Then Sir Laurence admonished the abbot and brethren to give up the body freely or else come to a bargain with the priest. The abbot and brethren answered coldly and appealed to Bishop Jörund, saying they heeded his words never a whit. Afterwards at home at Mödruvellir Laurence made a writ, and went to Múnka-Thverá, and one saint's day went up into the choir, and with letters patent laid his judgment upon them, namely; that the body of Solveig, daughter of Lopt, had right of burial at Baegis Water: and forbidding performance of mass there in the church while her body lay there in the churchyard. Their abbot and brethren asked Laurence to give them a copy of the judgment. Laurence bade them take the judgment, and declared he would give them a copy then or never; then straightway they departed with it. Next the abbot wrote west to Bishop Jörund and brother Björn, and they gave leave to sing again as before in the church. Lord

Bishop Jörund and brother Björn wrote north by the hand of Sir Snjólf; the main thing in the message was that they wished Laurence' writ of judgment to be delivered over into Snjólf's hand, for censure in case he had decided hastily and not heeded the law. It had also been said in the north that it had been read, and that was not proved. Sir Snjólf came to Múnka-Thverá with the aforesaid ordinance; the message was also sent to Sir Laurence and Sir Thórd. They came; Snjólf read out the letter of Björn the visitor, giving leave to chant in the church, till Bishop Jörund and he should take evidence in court after Easter. Bishop Jörund wrote to the same effect. Snjólf called on Laurence to read out his writ of judgment; then Laurence read the writ, and when the writ was finished, the abbot and many with him in the church snatched at the writ, and tore writ and seal away. Then Laurence and his friend were haled and thrust out of church and churchyard, and there was no more violence done to men's hurt. Laurence had such odds against him, that it was doubtful if he would not have received hurt had not Lord Thórd given him help and aid. Thus began the estrangement of Laurence and Bishop Jörund. Then, as often, Snjólf was the chief adversary of Laurence. There was peace now till after Easter.

22. After the day of Bishop John of Hólar, Lord Jörund and brother Björn rode north to Mödruvellir in the Hörg April 23 Valley, and summoned before them Hildibrand, the priest at Baegis Water, and like-

wise Thórir, the abbot at Múnka-Thverá, and the bishop made covenant of peace between them. Solveig's body was to have free burial at Múnka-Thverá. But the priest got off somewhat poorly. For the end of the suit was that Bishop Jörund was complete master over whatever men in the See of Hólar there were to deal with. For finally all men were willing to sit down and stand up and let all things go according to his will; for he was wise in all the wisdom of this world, and free with his money. To this covenant Laurence was no party; yet he rode to Mödruvellir to meet them; and then came his parting and estrangement from brother Björn; it was plain that brother Björn would let everything go according to the will of Bishop Jörund. Laurence made this request of him, that they should heed the archbishop's bidding, visiting from church to church and looking after church causes. Brother Björn declared he would not drift about the desert in Hólar diocese, but would go south to his ship, and go back to Norway.

'This is my wish,' said Laurence, 'that we heed as best we can my lord archbishop's business, and visit over all Hólar diocese, and get afterwards on the ship that is now here at Gáseyri, and go back in it to Norway in the summer.'

'Do as seems good to thee,' said brother Björn; 'thou keepest me not from my purpose.'

Now the plan Bishop Jörund had made with him really was that he should embark from the South, and reach Norway ere Laurence, and defame his doings.



‘Then wilt thou be willing to consent that I take upon me the business of us both,’ said Laurence.

‘Manage as thou likest,’ said brother Björn.

Brother Björn went back home to Hólar with Bishop Jörund, and there Laurence parted with him, and thought he himself had fallen into a heavy plight; all his business in the North quarter unperformed! He took counsel thereon with his friends, what was next to be done; for he perceived all the counsel of Bishop Jörund, knowing his wish was to have a swift riddance of the visitors. North of the heath they counselled him to assume all authority and visit on visitor’s business, and oppose Bishop Jörund if he would not hearken to the archbishop’s bidding. Then he wrote to his dear friend Haflidi Steinsson, asking his counsel. He wrote back, that he should go back in the same ship as brother Björn, and meet the Archbishop and Chapter at the same time as he; but he bade him beware most of all lest he opposed Bishop Jörund in anything, or wrought at all against his will, saying that, good scholar as he was, that was not enough to make him prevail over Bishop Jörund because of the luck and lordship that was his; and that he might do himself great harm by striving with him in any way.

And when this advice came back to Laurence, he said, ‘I know that Sir Haflidi, my comrade, wishes me well; but for the love and friendship he bears Bishop Jörund, he will not hear of any man speaking or acting against him; but I am bound to do my lord archbishop’s bidding.’

So he took up the harder way for himself, of

staying behind in the Northern quarter. But brother Björn went first to Skálholt and then on board. He was then given many fine gifts by Bishop Jörund, who sent a letter abroad by him to the Archbishop and Chapter.

In that winter, then past, this had befallen in the south of Iceland; so mighty an earthquake came, that eighteen farms fell down because of it. And in Norway the news was that Lord Archbishop Jörund fell very sick, in this way; that gout first attacked his leg, and then struck up into his body. The Chapter took unto them all rule and authority in temporal even as in spiritual matters, so that there remained by him only two lads and his cook. All were now turned out who had heretofore been his friends or supporters in law-suits.

23. Now to take up the story. Brother Björn being gone from Hólar diocese, and Laurence left, Laurence was prompted by some to start on his visitor's business, and he did so. No man heeded his word; every claimant appealed to Bishop Jörund, and no entertainment was given him as he journeyed. Then he rode home to Hólar, and asked the bishop to yield him a night's lodging at his bishop's seat; the bishop said he was not bound to, because the other, his equal in authority, had left the bishopric. Laurence said, that though he would fain disregard visiting or looking after the archbishop's business before he were worn to death, yet he would liefer proceed with his bounden duty. About this the bishop and Laurence came

to no terms. Then on a high-day, which was near at hand, Laurence went up into the choir and spoke of many sins, which went on there at home at the seat, and chiefly of filthy living and incests. - This touched the daughters of Bodvar, kinswomen of the bishop, most home, 'since,' he said, 'no man heard of their paying public penance, fasting, or standing outside the church door; and it was just the same far and wide over in Hólar diocese; and there was much reckless conduct.' Straightway a clamour arose. In the hearing of all he ended his discourse by saying that men should quit their evil ways and turn and mend. To this admonishings and helpful teaching, the bishop's kinswomen heeded not a whit; nay, when he came out of church, after mass, he got revilings and many words of contumely from the bishop's kindred. There were so many differences now between Bishop Jörund and Laurence, that at last it broke into open feud. Laurence saw that, now that the bishop was so adverse to him, he could carry out no chastisement upon the people, so he took passage in the Gáseyri ship. Bishop Jörund also sent abroad a certain priest of his own called Gudmund Halldórsson, with much treasure and gifts to the Archbishop and Chapter, and letters against Laurence.

Bishop Jörund was becoming very worn with years; he had long kept at home and was loath to visit or vex himself. Laurence had made note of many suits, which had gone on to his knowledge in a very slovenly fashion, specially suits about

marriage. At the last, when the traders were ready to sail, Laurence went to Hólar, and then had an interview with the bishop. Then Laurence read out all the heads he had drawn up about the careless and lawless ways of the bishop.

‘Nor will I hide from you, my lord bishop, that all these things I will read out before the archbishop.’

Then Bishop Jörund spoke more softly, and thus said: ‘I ask you this, Sir Laurence, that we let our suit drop, and write in harmony with one another; we will write about thee favourably to the archbishop; tear this letter in pieces which thou now hast read out touching it, and swear an oath of faith and fealty to us.’

Laurence said, ‘I know that so great is your kingdom, power, and lordship, that you can overcome and put me down; but not so much as to make me break that oath which I swore before my Lord archbishop, that I would tell him truly of the doings of the bishops and suits.’

And scarce had he got the words out, when Bishop Jörund leapt up straightway, and Laurence could get no speech with him, and so they parted. Laurence went north to Gáseyri, and so on board.

The traders put to sea nigh on St.  
 Aug. 27, Bartholomew’s Day. They had a poor  
 1308 wind and were long at sea. At first  
 they went north: towards Nauma-dale, and then  
 Sep. 29 they had a good south wind, and  
 got into Throndhjem in autumn nigh on  
 Michaelmas Day. Now of Björn it is to be told,



that he had got to Throndhjem on the latter St. Mary's Day, and had come with the letters and ordinance of Bishop Jörund, Sep. 8 bringing lying tales of Laurence, and stating that he had read out in Iceland many writs of the archbishop, which he said he knew not how Laurence had come at. The Chapter gave ear eagerly to this deliverance of Björn ; and the plan was straightway laid, that as soon as Laurence arrived from Iceland, all his goods, letters, and documents should be seized, and he thrust into a dungeon. Björn slandered him as best he could ; but most credit was given to what Bishop Jörund had written out to the Archbishop and Chapter.

24. Now to tell how Laurence had himself taken from the merchant-ship into the town, knowing nothing of what was afoot. They had landed at Hólm with no thought of alarm. The Chapter had news of this at once, and sent their men with a few clerics down to the pier ; and as soon as Laurence thought of disembarking, and stepped on the pier, the clerics gripped him, saying, 'Thou, Laurence, art to come with us ; a lodging is made ready for thee, whereto we must escort thee.'

Then straightway a crowd of men-at-arms rushed on him, and at first led him amidst them ; and when he saw he was taken, he tried to break away ; then they dragged and carried him in turn, and cruelly enough, till they came to a dungeon. It was most foul and called Gulskitni. Down into this he was kicked and plunged ; it was cold and foul both, and so dark he could

hardly discern his own hands. Then an iron door was locked which was over the dungeon. When Laurence came down on the stone wall, he fell in a swoon ; and when he came-to, he crossed himself and bade God help him. Then he raised himself up and found that the place could not hold over three men together. Nor was any living thing there. All this that has just been told was done so swiftly that this man Laurence never got word or oath in his own behalf to absolve him or help his case ; and as soon as it was done, the people went to the canons and told them what was done. Then they sent some people out to the merchant-ship to seize the goods Laurence had had in the ship ; but the merchants were so faithful that they would not say a word to them, but straight snatched up their arms and made as if they would fight to prevent them ransacking there. Then they took his lad whom he had had with him, and tried to force him to speak ; but this he by no means would. Still, they were told by a Thrond trading lad where his boxes were. Straightway there were seized and carried off to the bishop's house all the goods he had, great and little, into the hands of the canons and of Nidarós Church : the boxes were broken open ; and all his writs and documents were confiscated from him and read before the Chapter. They said that they did not know how some of the writs which he had, had come into his hands, for the archbishop had never issued them to him. Yet this was not in the least tested. On the day

after Laurence was flung into the dungeon, the canons held a Chapter: no man got in to hear them, and people did not know what they were dealing with. Now to tell of Laurence. He was two nights in the dungeon, and the keeper of the dungeon brought him, night and morning, bread and a little bacon and sour small beer; of this he could take hardly anything. There was a concourse both of those who had been the archbishop's servants and many who had been Laurence's friends in the town when he was duly honoured; and they said plainly to the canons that these were sorry doings of theirs, to seize a man and starve him in a dungeon before inquiry was made of what he had done, or before his suit came on after inquiry. The Chapter said it was easily proved that he had gone to Iceland with a forged writ, had got at the archbishop's seal, and under it had written letters enacting what he himself wanted. Then people said, 'Why was he not to be allowed a meeting with the archbishop?' 'Because,' they replied, 'the archbishop was so wroth with him on account of brother Björn's report and Bishop Jörund's letter that he would on no account see him.' This was a lie of theirs; for the Chapter seized for themselves all writs and ordinances. They decided all cases, and ruled all things, temporal even as spiritual; but the archbishop lay in his agony with all power confiscated from him. Eilíf, chosen archbishop afterwards, was Official;<sup>16</sup> while Sir Audun the Red was the greatest, richest, and most thought of of all

the canons, Sighvat the Landsman being now dead. Eilif and Audun bore heaviest upon Laurence because of his having long ago read the writ of ban over them in the choir when no man else dared to. Sir Solomon was newly made canon, having left his studies but a short while ago; he and other two likewise never went against Laurence; but all the rest were his adversaries.

25. Now to go back to tell how, when he had been famished two nights in the dungeon, the canons had him summoned. They all sat on the bench, as the custom was; but he was put down on the floor with fetters on his feet; he spoke very low, for he had been far gone in the dungeon, and before that sea-worn; and so it was to be expected that he would not speak very loud. Yet he greeted them. They answered him never a word. Then they spoke: 'Higher much was thy howling, Sir Laurence, when thou readest the writ of ban over us.'

'Be not wroth with me for it,' said he, 'though I did my lord's bidding.'

'Now,' they said, 'there shall be manifest and revealed the charges that are brought against thee.'

Then there was read the deed they had drawn, saying that two charges were brought against him; one, that he had forged letters of the archbishop's; but this in chief, that he had squandered the goods and offerings of St. Ólaf when he had to receive the offering and was appointed by the archbishop thereto. This charge had never been brought against



him ere he went to Iceland. Then were read the letters written by Jörund, bishop of Hólar, to weigh against him. Then Laurence was asked, would he confess to these things without force being used? if so, they would look kindly on his case.

Then he said, 'Now, how ye will deal with me lies in your power—whether I am to keep alive or no; but what I have not done, that will I never acknowledge.'

Then started up certain of the canons, saying, 'He has not been tried hard enough yet; he will have much more to say if he goes back to Gulskitni.'

Then a choice of two things was offered him: to make there in Norway just what confession the official drew up for him; or else to go back to Iceland under Bishop Jörund's authority and stay in prison till he sailed.

'I will take,' said Laurence, 'what most men least expect. I choose that ye send me back to Iceland under Bishop Jörund's authority.'

The Official proclaimed that the holy church of Nidarós should keep all the baggage he had come with. A lodging was got for him; it had a window, so that he could read his Hours; and for his victuals there was brought him a little bread and one other dish and a little small ale to wash it down; by night he had fetters on his feet; his feet swelled up, and the scurvy flew to his body. Icelanders were always coming to the window and talking with him; many men brought him food and drink,

so that he had no lack for that. This was told the canons, and they put iron spikes outside against the window, so that none should be able to talk with him. The woman named *Thuríd*, daughter of *Árni*, by whom he had had a boy *Árni*, often came to the window to him and brought him somewhat, as best she could, for food or comfort to him.

26. Now, when he was in these straits, many looked on him with eyes of compassion and showed him in word or deed some solace. The canons were as fierce towards him as ever; and, that he could have any exculpation from his charges,—that was not a thing to be heard of. Once it befell that he had got leave to go into the archbishop's lodging where he lay in his sickness, though this was at first without the chapter's knowledge. As soon as Laurence had come into the lodging with the fetters on his feet, the spies and eavesdroppers of the Chapter were ware of it; then he was haled out and not dealt with gently. The archbishop asked what that brawling was in the lodging; he was told that Laurence had come into the room and would have talked with him, and was in fetters, and had then been dragged out violently.

Then, with a heavy sigh, said the archbishop, 'God requite him for the heavy dealing he has to endure of his adversaries; and this he suffers for the stout service he did us. But what will it serve him to meet us here where the pang is only doubled by our looking in each other's face? in

me he will see sickness and sorrow, I misery in him.'

Then answered a servant of the archbishop, 'It seems heaviest of all to him, that he is told this is thy doing that he is so sore dealt with; and that this is all done by thy bidding.'

Then said the archbishop, 'Why will folk say so? That is not my bidding a whit. Thou mayest know, that when we fell on this sickness, the canons stopped all authority from us in spiritual as in temporal matters; and so little do we appoint or rule aught, that we do not even manage our daily food and drink: and they are fiercer than that to all those who stood on our side when we had to withstand them in law-suits. Now it is plain that God forbids not that things stay thus a while; but let Laurence be told to bear him as manfully as he may; for if he keeps alive there is hope that God may make manifest which side has stood more in the right.

This was told Laurence, and he got much comfort of the archbishop's words. Now the canons kept on Laurence stronger ward than ever, so that he could never stir or get out.

27. All Laurence's goods were seized, as we said, and taken up into the archbishop's house; and the books which he had were filched. It was done craftily, thus; various priests from Iceland, wintering then at Throndhjem, claimed them for their own. All winter was Laurence thus in prison,

and it was God's mercy that he stayed alive, and  
 April 10, past all nature that his health broke  
 1309. not. In spring, four nights before the  
 feast of Tiburtius and Valerian, Arch-  
 bishop Jörund departed this life. Then Eilif,  
 whom we noticed before, was chosen archbishop;  
 a man of good life.

Jan. 25. In Iceland, where there was much lamenting, the  
 news was that Skálholt Church was burnt on the eve  
 of Paul's Day, as swiftly as men swallow meat before  
 drinking. There was neither ember nor charcoal, for  
 that fire came down from heaven. Then died in Ice-  
 land Höskuld, the abbot of Thingeyri, and many  
 priests; also Sir Gamli, at Höskul Stæd, a goodly  
 preacher, who had power over priest and laymen,  
 and a good yeoman. That was called the Deadly  
 Spring. Then was also Lord Kolbein Bjarnason  
 slain by Charlemagne and Thorstein. In Norway  
 was slain Ögmund 'Üngin-dance.' There was war in  
 Norway from the foray of Eirik duke of the Swedes.  
 Lord Bishop Árni voyaged out after the church fire.

28. Now to tell how the chapter put Laurence  
 in chains on a trader, and sent a letter out with  
 him to Bishop Jörund. He was stripped of all  
 his goods, besides that which he prized dearest—  
 his books with the holy Church law in them: and  
 these were filched. They put to sea, the voyage  
 prospered, and they landed safe and sound at  
 Gáseyri. The traders, when they got to sea,  
 straightway smote the fetters off Laurence, saying  
 it was not the custom to carry folk in gaol or  
 durance over the high seas. The canon's message  
 was speedily delivered to Bishop Jörund, wherein  
 they sent Sir Laurence to be under his jurisdiction,



and told the way in which they imagined that they had received evidence in his case ; as was recorded above. Laurence came home to Hólar ; and when he went into the lodging where the bishop was, he fell on his knees. But the bishop stood up opposite him, and bade him sit by him, and so he sat down at the dinner-table. The bishop was most cordial to him, and bade Sir Laurence sleep there three nights. He did so ; and when they were past, the bishop had Laurence called into the vestry with some priests ; then he made him read out the ordinance of the archbishop-elect and likewise of the canons. Then Laurence asked the bishop how it was to go with his case.

‘Because of the doings of the Chapter I dare not let thee chant mass again ; but I tell thee, that thou shalt go, for all I care, freely over Iceland, whither thou wilt ; likewise in Skálholt See, if thou likest to come down there, or in the monasteries. Also thou canst do much service by educating and teaching, a matter wherein thou canst do well.’

‘Nought,’ said Laurence, ‘seems to me so hard as this, that I may not have the mass service.’

‘That thou gettest not,’ said the bishop, and sprang up and left the lodging.

Next night Laurence was at Hólar and a strange dream came to him. He thought he was standing up beyond the choir lectern, and held a holy wafer high up, as the priest holds it at mass ; on this wafer was marked *Alpha* and *Omega*. A

priest had come south thither over the fell, old, but full of precious lore. Next morning they two were reading the services together. Laurence told him his dream.

The priest said, 'In the spot where thou wentest up beyond the lectern here at Hólar, there shalt thou be set and appointed over that choir of clergy that is here at Hólar. Thou heldest up the wafer; thereby shalt thou have the highest authority and ministration in thy hand. Also there was marked on it Alpha and Omega; which is, being interpreted, the beginning and the end; even as thou keptest school here and stayedst here in the beginning of thy life, so shall the days of thy life end here also, with thee set and established in highest authority.'

'Peace, peace, my priest,' said Laurence, 'for now I am so beset and come so low, that my adversaries may well think that I shall never become one high in honour: and so to some other man must this dream belong.'

Then Laurence went west over Vatn Pass, where Gudmund was consecrated abbot at Thingeyri into the benefice of Höskuld his mother's brother. Laurence came there, and asked to teach the friars or clergy. But Abbot Gudmund durst not then receive him; for it was reported to have been said by Bishop Jörund that he did not wish Laurence to be in the north country in Hólar See. Thence he went to his friend, Sir Hafliði Steinsson, at Breidabólstað in Vestrhóp. Sir Hafliði went out to meet Sir

Laurence and received him with open arms, and had hangings put in his room, and seated him next himself, and treated him as handsomely as a bishop. Then Sir Hafliði's men asked why he made so much of this fellow Laurence, considering the deep disfavour he was in with Bishop Jörund.

Then answered Sir Hafliði, so loud that all heard, 'My sons, and many else, are to bear in mind that this hook-nose who sits by me, Laurence, on whom all men look down, shall be bishop at Hólar.'

In many ways Sir Hafliði was a prophet. Thence Laurence went south over the country. Abbot Thorlák asked him east to Ver, to teach there. He accepted, and was there twelve months; keeping school and <sup>1309-1310</sup> teaching many clergy and brethren. There he taught a poor scholar, whom Abbot Thorlák was helping, called Runólf. Sir Hafliði gave him a school nickname, saying that he was to be called 'Grandam'; and so thenceforth he was. Afterwards he was to the fore and a good scholar.

29. In that year it befell that Árni Helgason came with much authority, given him by King Hákon, and church timber withal, wherewith the church was to be built in Skálholt. Then came out the Pope's bull about the Jerusalem gift. Then was the slaying in battle of Charlemagne, and Thorstein, and of Orm. Much small-pox overran all Iceland, and many young men died. Next year it befell that there was an ecclesiastical council at Vienne in France.

That next year Laurence was at Ver in Thyk-

kvabaer, and taught there: but then came news south from Hólar that the Chapter were  
1311 ill pleased at Laurence' welcome, and thought it beseemed him to stay under penance. Then Abbot Thorlák dared not keep him. Then Hall Sigurdsson asked him to Dal under Eyja Fell. Sigurd 'Seal-tar' his father and Laurence had been good friends of old in Eyja Firth. Then Laurence went to Hall in Dal; he stayed winter there, but in spring he was minded to depart thence, for his and Hall's way of life were not the same. Then Laurence was sore concerned where he should betake himself. And one morning in spring, as Laurence lay in his bed he was pondering deeply, chiefly about where he should settle or go for help. Then a light slumber seemed to glide upon him, and a man to come into the lodging where he lay, clad as a clerk, and to come forward to the bed wherein he lay, and to speak thus:

'Truly thou art sore straitened and in need; but I give thee counsel, which if thou keepest, there shall be a turn for the better in thy fortunes. Read daily the Hours of the Holy Spirit, and forget it not; and the compassion of the Holy Spirit shall comfort thee, and loose thy toil and trouble.'

And when this man had thus spoken, he went away from him. Laurence had no chance of asking aught, or who he was; for swiftly it passed by him, and swiftly he woke. He gave God thanks for the vision, and began to keep the



Hours, and kept ever after to these Hours till the day of his death. A few nights after this came a letter to Laurence from the northern quarter, from Abbot Thórir of Múnka-Thverá, asking Laurence north to see him, to teach the brethren and clergy there, for twelve months at first; and for this he had Bishop Jörund's leave. Then Laurence managed to get north, and came to Múnka-Thverá, as we said, and Abbot Thórir and the brethren took kindly to him, and there he taught clergy and brethren.

30. In the summer the events were:—Lord Christopher went abroad, also Lord Ivarr 'hólm'. Queen Euphemia died. Our Lord Pope's missives came to Norway. That year died 1312 Lord Thórd and Lord Lopt. The winter after died the worshipful Lord Jörund, bishop at Hólar, on St. Bridget's Day; he had then been bishop forty-six years. He set up two monasteries, at Mödruvellir Feb. 1,  
1313 and at Stad in Reynisnes. He had the church at Hólar built up, and decked it with bells and furniture, and enriched the foundation with lands and goods, gold and refined silver, and other fair treasures, which shall be seen till Iceland is dwelt in no more. It is not to be forgotten what happened when Laurence heard that Bishop Jörund was dead and gone. He was there in the monks' room at Thverá, when all the bells were rung for a requiem. When a message of the news came from Hólar, Laurence, like the rest, started up hastily, and with the

speed of his uprising he got the ailment which never left him till his dying day; it was an injury in the small guts: this he himself testified unto a man whom he trusted.<sup>17</sup> Lord Bishop Jörund ere he died, appointed to Sir Thorstein Illugason, called 'Notchstone,' the officialty of the church of Hólar. But Sir Kodran Hranason of Grenjadarstad claimed to be Bishop Jörund's coadjutor, being appointed so by Archbishop Eilif. And whereas Sir Kodran had more backing, and most people were minded to speak and do according to his will, he took all authority in spiritual things in Hólar See. Laurence was at Múnka-Thverá through the winter, and many prospered greatly under his teaching. Next spring came Sir Kodran to Múnka-Thverá, where he was greeted like a bishop. Next day Sir Kodran called unto him many learned men, and showed them the letters which the archbishop had given out to him, making him coadjutor of Bishop Jörund when he was declared incapable and worn with age. But this declaration had been false, because as far as capacity or infirmity went, Bishop Jörund, old as he was if reckoned by years, was well able to keep all his authority. And after the reading out of the letter—Sir Kodran had it read out—he reeled off a long speech, asking what people thought; which of them had the right to be Official,—Sir Thorstein, whom Bishop Jörund had appointed, or he; he himself, he thought, was the better man because of the letters the archbishop had given him. Straightway all leapt up

with one voice saying, that his was the greater authority, because of what he had from the archbishop; while Sir Thorstein only had the word of Bishop Jörund. Sir Laurence was in there, sitting outermost of the priests.

Then said Sir Kodran, ‘How thinkest thou, Laurence? Thou knowest well the Canon Law; tell us what the law seems to thee to say: which of us two, Sir Thorstein or I, has the right to be Official in the church of Hólar as things stand?’

Sir Laurence answered, ‘Sir Kodran, why ask you such a thing? Nay, go home to Hólar, and let the Canon Law-books tell you; for their plain pronouncement is this:—to me the case is clear that you, Sir Kodran, were appointed by the archbishop to be coadjutor of Bishop Jörund, since he was worn with age—while he lived; but when he departed from this world, there in this world was an end of his authority; likewise, by the death of the bishop, your authority is also dead and done with. But inasmuch as he had his sound senses, when he appointed to Sir Thorstein the officialty and authority in spiritual things over Hólar bishopric, therefore my decision is, that that appointment has a right to stand, which he made in his last days.’

At this speech of Laurence Sir Kodran so chafed and raged, that he said thus, openly, ‘Get thee out, foul forger! Thou shalt not be judge here!’

‘I can do this,’ said Laurence, ‘I can leave

your presence; but the way to adjudicate between honourable priests, is the way I declare in this case.'

Such also was the archbishop's decision, when he heard that Sir Thorstein and not Sir Kodran had the right to the officialty. Sir Laurence might never come into Sir Kodran's sight while he was at Múnka-Thverá; and so he asked Abbot Thórir to let him depart thence. Then Sir Laurence went west to Thingeyri, and joyfully Lord Abbot Gudmund welcomed him. He set up school there, and there taught Abbot Gudmund and many others. There was a deacon there, called Egil, son of Ejyólf the goldsmith and Thorgerd daughter of Egil; on this man Laurence spent all his pains in teaching him Latin; the man knew well how to turn it into profit, and became a ripe scholar and fine versifier. Many others Laurence taught, of whom these got on best: Thórd son of speaker Gudmund; a poor lad named Ólaf Hjaltason; he taught him to be a good scholar, and he was afterwards schoolmaster at Hólar. Sir Haflidi at Breidabólstað also put under him his son, named Einar,<sup>17</sup> then ten years old. Sir Haflidi went thence to Hólar, when Bishop Audun came to Iceland, and stayed with his daughter's son at Hólar while Audun was bishop; for Sir Haflidi and Bishop Audun were the fastest of friends.

31. Now to tell how in the next summer after Lord Bishop Jörund departed, Sir Thorstein



Illugason and Snjólf Sumarlidason went abroad with the news of Bishop Jörund's death. Then Audun the Red was chosen bishop of Hólar; he was chief of the Chapter, and had long been treasurer of king Hákon, and best beloved of all the canons by the king. Many said that they chose Audun bishop of Hólar in Iceland, because they thought they would get no advancement from the king while Audun was by, as he had the king's ear most. He was consecrated bishop on St. Catherine's Day. He had long Nov. 25,  
1313 had the church in the north at Hálogaland, called the Church at Thrándarnes. He was a leading man, rich in substance. The yeoman Clement was the husband of his daughter Ólöf. She had before had for husband Thorstein a yeoman, whose sons by her were Red Eystein and Red Thorberg: and the son of the yeoman Klemet and Ólöf was called Vigleik.

In that year there was a wreck of the merchant-ship *Uxi* [Ox], at Eyri. Then arose a fray between the Eastmen and Gizur 'Flaw,' so that they beat him. That was a hard winter, in which Bishop Jörund departed: that winter was called the 'horse-death' winter. In the next year, when Bishop Audun was consecrated, Pope Clement died. Then the Emperor was betrayed on Easter-day with this treason, that when he had taken the Lord's body, poison was put into the chalice whereof he drank, and thus he came by his death. Then Sir Snjólf and Sir Thorstein came out in the summer with the Pope's ordinance to pay him

tithes of all Church property. They were also appointed by Lord Bishop Audun officers over all Hólar See, the lord bishop wintering in Norway.

32. Next year, in the summer, came Bishop Audun out to Iceland, landing at Seleyri. He rode the sand north to Hólar, where all  
1314 the chief priests were present. He was received at the bishop's place with little show. He was very stiff with riding, being an old man. Sir Kodran and Sir Snjólf did nothing but mock him; scant heed he paid to it. He had beams brought north from Eyri, whereof he had a timber hall built at Hólar. In autumn Bishop Audun visited over the western district, and consecrated the church at Thingeyri. Laurence was there at the time; Audun paid no heed to him then, and so of course Laurence gave himself little pains for him. Many complaints were lodged before Bishop Audun, which were useless because he did not know the ways of the country. And when he came home from his visitation, he drove away Skúli who was steward, and seized all his goods. In the winter arose great quarrelling and discord between Sir Kodran and Sir Snjólf on the one side, and Lord Bishop Audun on the other. They were both in league against him and appealed at first to the archbishop. Lord Bishop Audun took Grenjadarstad from Sir Kodran. Snjólf submitted to the bishop, and received the living of Grenjadarstad.

As soon as the lord bishop came home from

his visitation, he inquired where the relics of the good Bishop Gudmund were like to be; for they had been so neglected before, that people knew not where they were likely to be. Digging was first done inside the choir, but they were not found there—only some other relics in a coffin, just as Bishop Jörund had had them done up when he built the new church. Then the smith, Kolli Helgason, was sent for: for long he would not come, being somewhat out with the lord bishop. Later, though, he came, being more admonished to it by what was due to Bishop Gudmund, than by the bidding of Bishop Audun. Then said Kolli, that it was of no avail to look in the choir; he told them to break up the floor in the nave. He marked the spot so clearly, that the coffin was found where he said, and he opened it. Therein were found the bishop's remains, and all done up just as Bishop Jörund had told him. A leg was to be seen broken, with a clean clout wrapped round it; on the leg were huge knobs, as was to be looked for according as is told in the Life<sup>18</sup> of Gudmund, namely that he broke his leg when lying off Strand, when he was a scholar with Ingimund his kinsman. Then Bishop Audun was called, and he was very glad thereat, and had then a new coffin made, and the relics of blessed Bishop Gudmund put in it. Afterwards Lord Bishop Audun had it done up beautifully with a grating, and had a great cross put before it inside the church. Then straightway came a great gathering to the church, and many prayers

were made over all Iceland, and there were many goodly miracles. It was a great good chance for Bishop Audun that he was the first bishop of Hólar to take the relics of the blessed Bishop Gudmund out of the ground; by whose help his renown and report have waxed ever since, beyond all those bishops of Hólar that came after, even until now. Then straightway, throughout the days of Bishop Audun, there was a mighty holiday on Gudmund's Day; the bishop himself sang services and masses for his soul, and honoured him in all things to the foremost of his power. Lord Audun did this from the goodwill which God breathed into his breast, and somewhat also from the prompting of king Hákon when he parted with him. But before Bishop Audun came there was no remembrance kept of him, save that a mass was said for his soul, even as for the rest of the bishops of Hólar: but there was no holiday, for men knew not where were his relics and his resting-place.

Till Bishop Audun came there was no observance of the day of translation of holy Bishop John of Hólar: hours only were chanted, but it was not kept holiday. Lord Bishop Audun stopped this, so that there were orders over all Hólar See to keep it sacred by law, and to chant twice inside the church. By things like this it could be seen what a mighty ruler Bishop Audun was. He had brought to Iceland with him a stone-mason, and south of the church in Rafta Slope he found a red rock, and this he had broken up, brought



home and hewn, and had a stone oven made in the wooden hall (as is done in Norway) to carry out the smoke while he was sitting himself within. Also he had the high altar built of stone, and a hollow therein with an iron door before it, so that the treasures of the church could be in ward there, safe from fire and everything: likewise he had made all the steps which are to be seen in the church, and the pillars in the choir; and had the ceiling painted, and the ceiling put over the high altar, where coffins and other rubbish had been hitherto. Also he contributed good furniture and a fine cope called *Skarmande*. He had the bishop's lodging done up in a fashion seldom seen in so poor a country, and a pretty penny this repairing cost the church. Notable above all was his great hospitality: for though his adversaries were contending with him, and his servants announced it was time to go to table, thus he spoke to his foes: 'Go to table and to God's gifts; be not wroth with the meat, though ye be wroth with me.' Thus he often prevailed over his adversaries, so that after the merry and good cheer which he dealt them, they yielded everything into his power. All his service he went through in goodly style. He had a voice so beautiful, loud, and clear, that every one was ravished to hear his chanting. He was a mighty man in prayer, for he sang a third of the Psalms of Our Lady which holy Archbishop Anselm had writ in Latin. He kept a water-fast before all the days of the apostles and St. Mary's Days, and before many bishops'

days. He kept all the Hours through Lent and Advent; but not daily, save on the highest of high-days.

33. On St. Gregory's Day, the priests of most note in Hólar See assembled to Hólar. March 12, The bishop had the mass stopped when  
1316 it had got as far as the Gospel; for the bishop accounted Kodran excommunicated. This was accounted his offence, that he had let the brethren in Mödruvellir have authority in temporal things; the bishop thought that they had squandered a deal of money since the death of Bishop Jörund, and he wanted Kodran to pay it back to the church of Hólar. Next, Kodran had taken on him to do the duty of the Official; the third offence he accounted to be his conspiracy against himself. At this time all the priests were leagued in opposition to him, except Sir Haflidi of Breidabólstað; the bishop gave him good gifts, and he parted on ill terms with Kodran. The goodwill which Bishop Audun showed to the foremost priests met with ill requital; for he gave dispensations to their sons, having authority thereto from the Pope. He gave dispensation among the following:—Einar Haflidason, Paul Thorsteins-son, Thorstein Hallsson, Thormód Thorkelsson. These were the foremost men in Hólar See for scholarship and success. He also gave it to John Kodransson, who was a leading man and priest of note, because of his shrewdness and substance.

In that year John the Twenty-second was made

Pope. Bishop Árni went to Greenland. Then died Ingjald bishop of Hamar. In the year after that in which Bishop Audun came to Iceland much happened. At Mödruvellir, in the Hörg Valley, the convent and church with all the bells and church furniture were burnt. The convent in Nidarholm was also burnt. Then Lord Bishop Audun also took the abbey away from Abbot Thórir, at Múnka-Thverá. Then also arose a disagreement between Bishop Audun and Gudmund abbot at Thingeyri. The beginning thereof was, that Eyjólf, a yeoman in Forsaela-dale, told Bishop Audun that the alms which Karl the rich had given, being worth seven hundred and twenty ells of wool, which ought to be at Breidabólstað, in Vestrhóp, and which he had given for distribution among the paupers to whom the alms were due, had been taken off by Thorstein Hjálmsson, when he went from Breidabólstað to Thingeyri; and that these seven hundred and twenty ells had never come back to Breidabólstað. Lord Bishop Audun bade Sir Haflidi claim back these alms for the church at Breidabólstað. Sir Haflidi was loath unto this, for he was prebendary at Thingeyri and loved the church there well; still he did the bishop's bidding. And upon witness and inquiry made, the bishop decided that the property which Karl the rich had given at the first should be restored. Secondly, Abbot Gudmund and the brethren laid a complaint against the church of Hólar about the bishop's tithes: namely, that John, first bishop of Hólar,

had given all the bishop's tithes, west of Vatn-dale river, to Thingeyri Convent when he founded it, to help it. For this reason Abbot Gudmund appealed to the archbishop. Sir Laurence composed this appeal in Latin, and sided with the abbot in all his doings.

This same year at the beginning of Lent, Laurence and his son Árni took monk's vows ;

Árni had come to his father two years  
1317 since, and Laurence had him taught.

In Lent Laurence was consecrated monk, as well as Árni his son, by Abbot Gudmund. Then also Berg Sokkason joined the brotherhood. Laurence had known him of old at Múnka-Thverá, when he set himself to learn of Laurence : he was the most accomplished scholar, a splendid chanter, and a great orator ; so that he composed many histories of the saints very eloquently in Northern speech. Brother Berg and Laurence loved one another with the love of their hearts ; for all whom he saw were willing to learn good, and use their learning for good, Laurence loved.

Brother Laurence observed well the rules of St. Benedict, under whom he had vowed himself, so as to be an ensample for many. He was not much for gadding abroad, for he never left his cloister unless he was bidden by his superior, or for strong urgency. The times of silence he kept carefully : then, just as in the night when it was 'utmost silence,' he never said a word, either in Latin or Northern speech ; and between these times he spoke mostly Latin, as in church and congrega-



tion. Lowly and obedient he was to his superior ; he would never sit down anywhere but in the congregation ; though the abbot asked him, he would excuse himself, and beg that the other monks should sit. His sole business was to read, teach, and study books. He bestowed all pains, teaching Árni Latin and handwriting ; the lad became a most accomplished scholar, and wrote very finely, and was a versifier. It could be truly said that a convent that was made up of such monks as were then at Thingeyri, was a fine one.

34. Egil Eyjúlfsen, deacon, was in this year named above consecrated priest by Bishop Audun, and then he was first appointed schoolmaster at Hólar. Their parting seemed a mighty matter to Laurence, for he had formed the lovingest regard for him. In the summer Gudmund, abbot at Thingeyri, went abroad, and stayed abroad two years. The archbishop did nothing about his suit with Bishop Audun, not wishing to do aught till Audun came to answer for himself. In autumn Bishop Audun visited over the Western district. And as he rode from Breidabólstað to Thingeyri, the brethren barred the convent in the face of Bishop Audun, and made no procession to meet him. Meat was prepared for his people, and also for himself, but no ale. Sir Haflídi had his own ale brought out, and Audun and his people drank this. Brother Björn Thorsteinsson was prior over the convent and establishment. Many yeomen had come down over Vatn-dale to defend the convent from the bishop, if he thought of assaulting

it; but little liking showed he or any of his men for doing so.

1319 Next year it came to pass that King Hákon Magnússon, king of Norway, died. In Sweden also it befell that King Birgir starved in prison his two brothers, Duke Eirík the long and Valdimar: the wife of Eirík was Ingibjörg, the daughter of King Hákon; she was afterwards called the duchess. In the same year died Sir Haflidi of Breidabólstað, a man of mark, sometime chaplain of King Eirík, and afterwards for long steward at Hólar and Thingeyri. Then died Sir Kodran Ranason in Norway.

Sir Egil had leave of Lord Bishop Audun, and had thought to go to Norway in the ship that was at Seleyri, in which same ship Sir Grím Ófeigsson was to have gone with business of Lord Bishop Audun; but that ship was weather-beaten back. Sir Egil was now still at Hólar, and the bishop took him utterly into his love. Then in the summer came a writ summoning out both bishops of Iceland, both lawmen, Lord Ketil Thorkelsson, six officers of the king, and six of the chief yeomen. Lord Grím Thorstein took the jurisdiction, and Erlend the yeoman from Upsir in Svarfadar-dale had the jurisdiction over the Northern quarter. Then was destroyed

Dec. 23 the church in Skálholt in winter, just before Thorlák's Day. Magnús Eiricksson, son of King Hákon's daughter, was chosen king over Norway, Sweden, and Gotland. Lord Erlend Vidkunsson was Regent over all the kingdom of Norway, Lord Archbishop Eilíf and all the mightiest lords in Norway consenting, King

**Magnús** being three years old. Next summer Lord Bishop Audun made ready to journey abroad from Gáseyri, was driven back, and landed at Húsavík, Sir Egil being then still with him. He stayed the winter at home at Hólar.

35. In autumn Sir Egil was mediator to reconcile Bishop Audun and brother Laurence, putting it clearly before the bishop that a man like Laurence was a tower of strength to him. Bishop Audun sent Sir Egil west to Thingeyri, and brother Laurence rode to Hólar with him; and they met, and the bishop received him worthily, granting him his friendship; whereunto brother Laurence granted his obedience in return; and was to teach the son of the lord bishop's daughter, named Eystein. This youth went with brother Laurence, who taught him; and he afterwards became a man of mark, and for a long time had St. Mary's Church in Throndhjem, and was called Eystein the 'Red.' Through the winter and spring there was disquiet in Hólar See; for, because of the slanders of wicked men, it was said against Bishop Audun that the tithe would have to be paid by property assessed at a hundred and twenty ells<sup>19</sup> and upwards. The vagabonds would not brook this, and banded together over Skaga Firth, and raised a gang. They laid wait for the bishop in Höfdahólar, and there was a danger that they might have taken him and laid hands upon him, if Rafn Jónsson from Glaumbaer and many priests had not yielded the promise that thenceforth the tithes should be imposed and arranged as of old,

and that the paupers should not receive a share from property worth less than six hundred ells.

In the winter people fared very hard ; far and wide was the deep-sea ice, and the weather was very bitter. In the spring Lord Bishop Audun set his face against the vow that had been made on Easter-day to the sainted John bishop of Hólar, namely, that every yeoman in Skaga Firth between the lava-fields who was liable to dues, should give a clipped sheepskin, wherewith to buy a graven image, to be made for the sainted John bishop of Hólar ; this the yeoman Rafn Jónsson had to prevent being done. The weather took a turn for the better in this way :— On Easter-day, before high mass, when the shrine was brought out, the north wind straightway dropped dead ; and after high mass it arose from the south, and in evening, at evensong a thaw came and kept up till the ice and snow were all gone. And through the spring there was good grass, and the sea-ice drifted away. Also there was contention between Bishop Audun and Sir Snjólf, from whom he took Grenjadarstad, the charge being that he would not take the clerk whom the bishop ordained to that place. The bishop exacted an oath that seven clerks should be bound to be kept at Grenjadarstad. Many other charges the bishop had against Snjólf ; the end was that the bishop laid on him the uttermost ban, depriving him of all communion with Christian men. Snjólf heeded this not a whit, but went to Norway.



Árni, bishop of Skálholt, had sailed in the summer before to Norway, and died in Norway in the winter. Orm Thorsteinsson was bishop-elect of Skálholt. In the spring ~ 1320 just spoken of, the ship *Shák* [*Chess*] touched East Firth and broke on the ice. Abbot Thórd and Berg Jónsson were on board, and all hands reached land sorely distressed. The aforesaid Berg was on his way with letters to Bishop Audun. Straightway the bishop made Berg start off and sent him south to Eyri to take ship there, and this was done. In summer, at the moot, the laymen from the Northern quarter leagued in the resolve to suffer no innovation at the hand of Bishop Audun. After the moot Lord Grím and many men of mark rode to Hólar and parleyed with Bishop Audun; the bishop was not softened at their words, and they against whom he had complaints before submitted unto him; and thus they parted.

36. In summer Bishop Audun made ready and departed from Hólar with his company, and Sir Egil went with him. Sir Thorstein Illugason he left for his Official. In the same ship was also Orm, bishop-elect of Skálholt. They put to sea, and had a fair voyage, and reached Norway. Lord Bishop Audun went north to Thronthjem, and there met Archbishop Eilíf, who received him kindly; there he wintered. Now it is to be recorded that Lord Ketil Thorláksson came to Iceland with writs from the king. The land was then sworn in to King Magnús. Then came to Norway Lord Gudmund, abbot from Thingeyri,

and Sir John Kódransson, who was at Hólar through the winter and kept school there.

Lord Bishop Audun abode in Throndhjem and feasted deep at Yule; not till far past Yule was it over. At his banquet also the archbishop stayed some days; but the canons continually. Early in Yule Lord Audun took gout; first it came on the leg at the knee, and then the pain struck up into the body. Leeches were called, all counsel sought, and it grew worse and worse. So stout a fellow was he, that he sat up with his mates, making them as merry as though he had not a pang. And when he saw how it would be with him, he called the archbishop and all the chief men, bidding them to his banquet still. And, after the pledging of Mary,<sup>20</sup> he spoke nobly, and thanked God and Mary his sweet mother for all the rich estate and fair fortune which God had given to him, so unworthy of this world; begging all men nigh him there to forgive him and pray God for him, and saying out that within a few days he would go forth from the world. First he gave to the archbishop, to the canons, and to all the foremost men who had gathered there to banquet, the goodliest gifts; entreating them also, that three nights thence, however it went with his life, they should hold like feast and revel. Then all took leave of him, and he went away leaning on somebody. Then he took to his bed and made all his dispositions, choosing to rest in St. Mary's Church there in the town, seeing that he might not lie in that Mary's Church where he was bishop, at Hólar

in Iceland. And after he was anointed, the archbishop came to him and asked him who in Iceland was fitted best to be bishop at Hólar, when he was gone.

Then Bishop Audun answered, 'In Hólar See there are many fine clergy; but before God I will answer for this, that no man seems to us better fitted to be bishop than brother Laurence at Thingeyri. This can we make good for many reasons. And first, because he has given himself to God, and served well and devoutly under the holy rule of St. Benedict; this was told us for truth when we were in Iceland. Further, he is the best scholar, and well skilled in Canon Law. Also he is bold and trusty in all business that concerns law-suits; and he would never let the rights which belong to Holy Church be wrested from her hand; for the men of North Iceland need this—to have a bishop over them who is both a great scholar and a firm enough hand to chastise all the perverseness and disobedience in that place.'

'Thou knewest,' the archbishop said, 'how he withstood us both, when he was with Archbishop Jörund, and read the writ of ban upon us twain.'

Lord Audun replied, 'Doth not the need of Holy Church that men like this should be chosen to be governors and bishops, count to thee for more than certain offences done against us? this also is most right and becoming before God, that if in this and that we have transgressed against him, we should hereby redress it. Laurence is not guilty for doing his master's bidding.'

So heartily did Audun speak about this matter, that he wept; and all that were there praised his speaking. And when Bishop Audun had  
Jan. 21, received all God's sacrament, he died, on  
1322 the second day of St. Agnes, with great glory and high report; and his resting-place is in St. Mary's Church in Throndhjem. His departure was observed with the utmost honour and worship. His heirs increased the banquet which he had kept up in his lifetime, and bade guests afresh, and turned it into a funeral feast. It has been the common speech of men, that no man of all the Norse bishops was ever such a prince in Iceland in all manner of magnificence, as Bishop Audun.

37. Now to tell how after a little while had gone by, the Archbishop summoned the Chapter, and dealt with them about the choice of a bishop to the church of Hólar. Archbishop Eilíf would have nothing but the choice of brother Laurence for bishop Hólar, even as Bishop Audun had pointed out. By God's will it was so decided, that Archbishop Eilíf chose and elected brother Laurence bishop at Hólar, all the canons consenting. This election was published in the chancel, Christ Church, in Nidarós, a *Te Deum* being first chanted, and bells rung.

Before this it befell that Orm Thorsteinsson, bishop-elect to Skálholt, died ere he was consecrated. Then Orm Steinsson was chosen bishop in Skálholt, and was loath to be; and so he made his pilgrimage to the threshold of the apostles Peter and Paul, and died soon after. After this



‘Skiff’ Grim was chosen, who before that was abbot at Hólm in Nidarós. He was consecrated bishop in Skálholt, and was bishop three months, and spent thirty-six thousand ells value, the property of the church in Skálholt; he died in Högn, when the traders were lying by for a wind. After that Bishop John Halldórsson was chosen and consecrated to Skálholt; he was of the Dominican Order, a great scholar, and noble preacher; he had been long abroad studying in Bologna and at Paris in France. While this was passing in Norway, people in Iceland were unaware of how things had gone there. At the moot, a ship, driven back, came to Eyri. Among people of note therein was the Lady Málfríd. Only then did it get abroad that bishops were chosen for Iceland; Bishop John to Skálholt, and brother Laurence to Hólar. People could not think who this Laurence could be, not believing at first that brother Laurence from Thingeyri could be elected.

Now it must be told how this summer, a little after the moot, it came to pass, that Abbot Gudmund from Thingeyri was asked by the Lady Gudrún, daughter of Thorstein, 1322 then dwelling at Holtastad in Langdale, to a friendly feast; and with Abbot Gudmund went the two brethren, brother Björn and brother Laurence. And when he and they were riding home, and had passed over Blanda, a man named Thorvard, and nicknamed ‘Bishop,’ met them; he told them of the arrival of Bishop Audun’s ship, and of his death. Abbot Gudmund asked what

people said about who was chosen bishop to Hólar. Thorvard said that he was called Laurence. Now they had not yet heard of the ship's arrival or the news. And when the man had left them, brother Björn said to Laurence, 'Brother Laurence, wilt not thou be the bishop-elect?'

He answered, 'Flout me not; it seems to me likelier that the canons in Norway have so plucked me down from my degree, as many know, that I have not the least hope of their ordaining authority unto me.'

And when they came home to Thingeyri, within two days after that, a letter came from the Lady Málfríd to brother Laurence, saying that she had been there in Christ Church in Norway, that he was elected bishop at Hólar, and that this had been published in the chancel. He could not now hide from himself the truth of the stories that tallied. He was deeply moved about this matter, thanking God and his sweet mother Mary for all the gifts vouchsafed unto him. He kept his seat in the choir and cloister. In summer on

Aug. 3 the latter St. Ólaf's Day, Sir Egil Eyjólfsson came with the archbishop's decree; he had entered the country a few days before on the ship that put in at Gáseyri. The decree was in this wise, there were two letters with hanging seals, and this was their tenor: one said that the archbishop remitted to him all the offences which he had done against the church of Nidarós, the Archbishop and the Chapter; giving this reason, to which the Canon Law testifies, that

the entering of a cloister is like any other baptism, and so all that a man has done against God's laws is remitted to him as soon as he goes under the holy order. The sense of the other letter was, that the archbishop, with the counsel and enactment of all the canons, elected brother Laurence bishop at Hólar, with all the state and glory which befits the rank and honour of a bishop; confirming his authority, that he might receive his consecration with all speed.

38. When this decree had been made and delivered, he and all with him thanked God for this gift and authority that was vouchsafed him; of this any man soever may be sure, that what elected this man Laurence was rather Divine mercy and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, than show, riches, or bribery; seeing that they who before were his chief adversaries chose him to this station; so that this was the breath of the Holy Spirit in their breasts, without aid of any of Laurence's friends or kin. This over, the lord bishop-elect wrote to Lord Ketil, who was then governor in Iceland, and he came to Thingeyri, and north to Sir Thorstein the Official. They all rode together, and the lord bishop-elect with them to Hólar; where a feast was prepared for them. On St. Laurence's Aug. 10,  
1322 Day the decree of the archbishop about the election of Laurence was announced from the choir by Lord Ketil Thorláksson. Then the *Te Deum* was sung with the ringing of bells, and Lord Ketil and Sir Thorstein the Official led the lord bishop-elect to his seat. The lord bishop-elect

and Lord Ketil parted in the friendliest fashion. The lord bishop-elect had an inspection of the goods of the church at Hólar, and for all manner of reasons it was very bare at his coming. God had shown before this in the spring that the coming of Laurence pleased him. For there was a whale drifted up on that estate of the church at Hólar which is called Ness ; this whale was both fine and large, fully thirty-eight thousand four hundred pounds weight, so that people could not have had a better jetsam come just then upon the place. The lord bishop-elect took Skúli Íngason the priest back for steward at Hólar ; he had had it a long while in the days of Bishop Jörund, and was thought a good overseer : Sir Haflidi, when he was himself steward, trained him first. Sölvi he made bailiff, and Gudrún, daughter of Skegg, his wife, he made stewardess. These two were the most experienced wardens, and they stayed as long as he was bishop. Over all the storehouses of the church he appointed those of ripe counsel, and declared before all men that he would have all the rules kept just as Bishop Jörund had them. The lord bishop-elect said he would not meddle with daily business, save with his cellar and wardrobe, and the governing of the clergy ; and every gift of wadmál that came he made over to the

Aug. 15 poor. On the first St. Mary's Day he preached, and gave handsomely to the stout fellows who had come to the monastery ; then straightway the church and monastery seemed to rejoice at the coming of such a ruler. After St.



Mary's Day he rode north to Mödruvellir. There were no brethren there, though Bishop Audun had made provision for priests there; brother Thorgeir in Lögmanns Slope was a sort of vicar, and brother Thórd at Vídivellir in Skaga Firth, but brother Thorbjörn and brother Brand had gone home to Hólar and died there. Hólar Church, ever since the monastery was burnt, took all the rent from the foundation, and all the goods that belonged thereto; two priests were there with a steward, and two deacons. In such a matter it could be seen how hard a task Lord Laurence had when he came into power; for he saw clearly that it thwarted God's laws for religious men to be out in the world like other secular priests; yet the lord bishop was loath to do aught to it till he met the archbishop. Thence he went to Múnka-Thverá, where there was lack of a head, Abbot Thórir being, as we said, deposed from his abbotship and away in Norway. The lord bishop-elect appointed Berg Sokkason from Thingeyri as a head of the Thverá monastery, in temporal as in spiritual matters; and forthwith, then and there, brother Berg amended their ways unto goodness. Thence the lord bishop-elect went north to Grenjadarstad; here Sir John Kodransson held the living which had been appointed unto him by Sir Thorstein the Official. To him also the bishop-elect gave full powers until he should return from Norway. Then the lord bishop-elect rode home to Hólar and wintered there. He made Ólaf Hjaltason, who was deacon there,

schoolmaster at home in the seat, and found for it scholars who came daily to school. Then straight he fell to taking count of men's ways of life in his See, clergy and laymen alike, admonishing them daily to quit the path of sin; and before he was bishop he had no bigger business than this. The church at Hvamm, in Vatn-dale, owned two shares in the home-estate, the yeoman Finnbjörn Sigurdarson owning the third. The church seemed to the bishop-elect to be in a sorry way, for the yeoman Finnbjörn was managing both the church's share and his own. The lord bishop-elect found fault therewith, and desired to appoint some priest over the church's share, while Finnbjörn should manage his own. But Finnbjörn was loath. It came to this, that the lord bishop-elect dealt him an admonition to let it go, saying that, if he did not, he would proceed against him. Or else he offered to buy his share of him for its full worth. The end was, that by good men's counsel, yeoman Finnbjörn sold his share in the estate for seven thousand two hundred ells of stuff, the lord bishop-elect wishing the church thus to have the estate free in its hands. He appointed over it his son, Egil Grimstúnga, and helped him to move his household thither; and to the Lady Gudrún and the Lady Thuríd he lent Hvamm until his return from Norway. Early in spring the lord bishop-elect visited over the Western district, and was at Breidabólstad, in Vestrhóp, with Sir Thorstein 'Shardstone' on the day of John bishop of Hólar.

April 23,  
1323

The winter and spring were then so hard that sheep were lost ; still, on the day of John bishop of Hólar, matters mended.

39. Lord Gudmund, abbot at Thingeyri, and the brethren spoke to the lord bishop-elect about the bishop's tithe. He answered that he was not fully enough appointed to deal with it till he was consecrated bishop, and he invited the taking of umpires, by them on their own behalf, by himself on behalf of the church at Hólar ; and so it was settled between them. For the side of Hólar church he chose Sir John Kodransson, while the abbot and brethren chose Lang-Orm, provost at West Firth, and holding the living of Holt in Önund Firth. Both sides were to accept these men's award until the archbishop gave his own. They were over this arbitration while the bishop-elect was at Thingeyri, and their award was that the foundation and convent of Thingeyri should keep Hjalta Bank, which Bishop Jörund had assigned to Thingeyri long ago ; but Bishop Audun had taken it from them and given it to the priest Sir Jóngeir, who abode there some years. This the abbot and friars thought a pitiful recompence for the tithe ; but so it had to rest until the archbishop should make an end of the matter ; and with this they parted.

In the summer the bishop-elect took ship in the *Krafs* [? *Scratch*] with Clement Atlason, yeoman, and the people he had with him. These men went with him, Sir Egil Eyjólfsson, Sir Stephen, Athalbrand Magnússon, Deacon Eirek the Red, and

ship's crew. In the summer, till he embarked, the bishop-elect stayed at Mödruvellir. A day or two before they put out, three ships came to Gáseyri, each a dinner's length after other, and all from Norway. Hallkel, yeoman at Ungland's-Bowl, was in one; Sigvaldi in the second, called the *Elftri*, and on the third ship, called the *Glód* [*Embers*], was Sir Snjólf. The two first ships lay off Gáseyri in harbour to begin with; they had good wares for the north country. Sir Snjólf and the bishop-elect met, and Snjólf would make him no reverence. Awhile they talked, somewhat stiffly. At last the bishop-elect asked, 'Wilt thou give me the parting-kiss?'

Snjólf answered, 'Laurence, kiss thee I will not; for, maybe, as time passes, thou wouldst call it a Judas-kiss.'

So they parted joylessly.

40. Now to tell how yeoman Clement and the lord bishop-elect put forth from Gáseyri: this was on the feast-day of Abbot Bertin;

Sep. 5. they had a good wind north off Langness, and also eastwards over sea; a strong good breeze and keen weather. They were out only a little time and touched Hálogaland, in the north, opposite Brunney. Where they were going was an inshore reef, but they saw where they had got to and launched a boat. But the trader dashed up on the skerry quicker than they thought; the ship split from under, and straightway the keel was down, and all the freight sank. The lord bishop-elect, all the women, and all



the less fighting folk went into the boat; some got to land with spars, Sir Egil with the mast-tree. All the people reached land, save that one woman died on the spot, named Thórdís, and known as 'Blossom-cheek.' The whole fund of money mostly perished instantly on the spot; yet a good deal was saved, for they dragged up the rolls and bales of wadmal and the casks of train-oil; and of dried fish there was none on board. The lord bishop-elect reached land first, yet, as might be supposed, distressfully. He was no long time there before a freight-ship was got and hired for him to go south to Throndhjem. On board with him were Sir Egil and Laurence' son, brother Árni, and some of his servants, with deacon Athalbrand; Sir Stephen, however, whom he appointed to stay behind by the wreck, and have all the goods dragged up that could be found, wintered there with a few servants of the church at Hólar. The lord bishop-elect came with his train to Throndhjem, and Lord Archbishop Eilif was there in the town. Laurence went up to the bishop's house, and with leave he entered, and fell down before the archbishop, craving forgiveness for his transgressions against him. Forthwith up got the archbishop's self, and lifted Laurence, bidding him welcome. 'All that is remitted already,' said the archbishop, 'as may be seen in the letter I sent to you. Also, if in any matter we have dealt amiss with you, we pray you forgive it us.' 'That,' said Laurence, 'was only right.' The archbishop bade him tell him how he had fared since

he left Iceland. The lord bishop-elect told him how all had befallen, shipwreck and all ; also how he and his men had come without stores. This vexed the archbishop, but he invited him at his own charges, as well as his men, to eat with him in his archbishop's house. Gladly the lord bishop-elect accepted this ; as it seemed best to close with the archbishop in the matter. Sir Árni, known as ' Wader,' was then steward at the Archbishop Eilíf's house, being his sister's son. He was archbishop afterwards next to Archbishop Paul, and the bishop-elect's dearest friend. As we said, it came to pass that Laurence sat at table with the archbishop the winter through. Sir Egil sat on a steward's chair, and the others on the proper seats. The bishop-elect chose Stephen Hauksson for his cupbearer and servant, because he was an Iclander. Stephen was the greatest master in many crafts—goldsmith's work, carving, and draughtsmanship, and Laurence made him beautify the bowl of John bishop of Hólar, which John got at Rome. This bowl had lain neglected at Hólar until then, but Laurence had it beautified, and himself wrote the Latin verses thereon now graven. There were many matters which the lord bishop-elect had before noted about all the knotty points that had come up in Hólar See : he asked what the archbishop thought was the law upon these, for in all things he was fain to observe the law. There, with the archbishop, Laurence wintered, and the archbishop in all things did lovingly by him and his people. In the autumn of the summer

in which Laurence sailed, there came to Skálholt in Iceland Lord Bishop John Halldórs-son. He performed the consecrations <sup>1323-4</sup> of both Sees: then were consecrated Sir Paul Thorsteinsson and Sir Ólaf Hjaltason with many more consecrated priests from Hólar diocese.

41. Now must be told how Lord Archbishop Eilif summoned the bishops to him— Lord Audfin, bishop of Bergen and <sup>1324</sup> Lord William, bishop of the Orkneys. These came to Throndhjem on John the Baptist's Day. Lord Archbishop Eilíf consecrated Laurence bishop with all the <sup>Sunday, June 24</sup> pomp and honour which Holy Church keeps and observes in such cases; with the usual forms of law, the aforesaid bishops standing by. A little before this, in the spring, Sir Stephen had come south from Hálogaland to Throndhjem on a trader with the goods of the church of Hólar. Very soon after the consecration of Laurence to be bishop, brother Ingimund Skútuson laid a complaint against the church of Hólar and Bishop Laurence, because provisions had all gone at Mödruvellir and all the brethren were driven away, while the church and bishop of Hólar had laid hands on all the rents of the church of Mödruvellir. Ingimund was then a brother at Elgisetr of the Order of St. Austin.

To this complaint Laurence thus answered, 'All good people know that the monastery at Mödruvellir had gone to pieces when I was bishop-elect; inasmuch as Bishop Audun had

charged the brethren, that, all because of their foolish handling of the light which they had gone tipsily about with on the night they came from Gáseyri, the fire had struck up into the tapestries in the chancel, and some of it down into the chest of vestments ; which last they opened, because there, as it seemed, the fire was most furious. Bishop Audun said he was not bound to have their monastery mended, since this damage had come from their own recklessness.'

The archbishop answered, 'You know well it is Canon Law, that any convent originally founded, is to stand, if there be no let or hindrance, for ever and ever. Further, if the rents and revenues of the church and monastery have been settled upon the Hólar church, who else shall be bound to keep up the cloister, or have it built, if not the bishop of Hólar? But let those brethren who have been clearly proved guilty of what you said, be thrust into the strictest monasteries. Also we will appoint judges-delegate out in Iceland, to give out our judgment about the said case.'

Lord Laurence said this pleased him well ; nor was any more done about this case at the time.

42. Also Lord Abbot Gudmund had now written out to the archbishop about the tithe case. Brother Árni read out the whole process and evidence of Thingeyri monastery before the Archbishop and Chapter. The archbishop said he would fain also hear Bishop Laurence' answer. 'For,' he said, 'we were told, that when you were yourself in the monastery, it seemed to you



law that the church of Thingeyri had a right to the bishop's tithes; that is, according to what your son the young brother has told us.'

Laurence answered, 'Thy news, my Lord, is true, namely that when I was in the monastery at Thingeyri I pleaded as best I could that the monastery had a right to the tithes, according to the gift of St. John, first bishop of Hólar, who founded the Thingeyri monastery. But though he was a good man, he could not give them for longer than his own life, or tie the hands of future bishops of Hólar.'

Brother Árni, his son, answered, 'What you said when you were at Thingeyri was, that there was a right to keep them, now that the two bishops after John had agreed with him and upheld the gift unalterably. Now, those two bishops after him upheld this; so that one can count up seven bishops after him throughout whose days the tithes remained with the Thingeyri monastery, right on until Bishop Jörund confiscated them in the days of Abbot Vermund.'

'Thanks, young brother,' said the archbishop, 'thou standest by thy own cloister. We beg you, Lord Laurence, and likewise enjoin you, to give the convent good terms, and suffer us a right to see to it.'

Bishop Laurence said, 'Will you confirm whatever agreement I and Abbot Gudmund, with the friars, make together?'

The archbishop said he would do that gladly. No more was done about the business.

43. It also happened now that Sir Egil asked and got Grenjadar living from the archbishop, thinking that it was really under his authority, though it had been lost by the carelessness of Bishop Audun. Bishop Laurence recompensed the archbishop in a way that pleased him well, for the entertainment of himself and his people. And when Lord Laurence was ready to go, he took leave of the archbishop cheerily. The archbishop gave goodly gifts to Lord Laurence, and they parted with true loving-kindness. Lord Laurence went south to Bergen and took passage in the ship *Yeoman Bassi*. They put to sea, had fair voyage, and came in at Eyri on the selfsame day that Laurence had put out from <sup>Sept. 5,</sup><sub>1324</sub> Gáseyri—Bertin's Day. Horses had been got for him ; and Lord Bishop Laurence rode north to Hólar, and all the folk at the seat rejoiced in him. He chanted first mass at all Holy Masses.

44. Now must be told how, as soon as Laurence had settled down at home at Hólar, he shaped a fair and godly life, first, in what touched himself, and after that in all other men. And we will tell, point by point, of his conduct of life, because there is in it a pattern for many a good man who wishes to walk righteously both in spiritual and temporal things. About the way of his life we have here put together nothing that we cannot before God attest ; for this man was so steadfast and settled in his conduct, that all his life he behaved himself just as thou mightest have beheld him behave any

two days, night and day, if thou hadst stayed with him. In divine service he was so constant and devout that he kept every service, matins, and evensong, masses and daily hours ; and no business bore so hard upon him, but he let it all go by that he might attend the holy services, winter like summer, and night like day. All the clergy who had to chant and read, deacons or clerks, he disciplined in such wise that they did it properly. Sir Olaf Hjaltason he made schoolmaster, to teach grammar. He received many scholars for teaching, rich men's sons and many poor men also, and had them taught till they were capable. All the time that he was bishop, he had a notably good school kept ; brother Árni also taught many ; and there were always fifteen or more going to school. Those who had read had to repeat the lesson the evening before to the schoolmaster, and he dealt with by him if they read or chanted amiss. Sir Valthjóf he made choirmaster, and his business was to settle what each should chant. Also before the highest of high-days—Yule or Easter or St. Mary's Days—he had the priests and deacons and all the clergy summoned, and then he preached and gave them a sermon on the way it behoved them to act on each high-day ; admonishing them to confess above all if they had any sins in their soul unshriven. On all high feast-days he led the chanting himself, and chanted mass and preached in so scholarly and devout a fashion that many came to repent and amend because of it. Sir Valthjóf stood ever by him and was his chap-

lain. At high mass he always had the same deacon to minister to him ; this was Deacon Einar Hafidason, whom he loved beyond all his clergy, and accounted as his true and trusty friend. The service of mass itself he delivered with heartfelt piety and with tears welling ; and such compunction visited the bystanders, that in the low-chant<sup>21</sup> there was more weeping and catching of breath to be heard from them than clear words. All the signs of the cross he made clearly and soberly, so that it could never seem too fast or too slow, but ever in due measure. After mass, when he came into the vestry, he sometimes rebuked the deacons and clergy for aught that seemed to him to have gone carelessly in the reading or chanting or other matters. He could not bear to see a deacon with a baggy blouse under his mass-vestments and dalmatic ; that, he said to them, was how the mass-vestments and the stuff got torn. Likewise no priest or deacon durst have a cope beneath his long gown, having a choir-cope outside it ; he told them to tear off the gear which was tightened down round them. He would never allow singing in two or three parts, calling it fiddler's folly ; no, they were to chant plain song, just as it was set in the choir-books. In the bell-ringing, he chose to have the same rule as in the days of Bishop Jörund—namely, to go out about midnight in winter. He liked those of the clergy who had to go out to have a good nap after vespers. Every time he chanted mass, five paupers had to be taken in and given meat enough for one meal.



45. The course of Lord Bishop Laurence' Day was this. When the bell began for matins, he read the service to the Virgin while he dressed : likewise the clergy read the service to the Virgin in the choir while the bell rang. When it pealed, the bishop came forth and was in his seat all matins chanting with the other clergy. After the chanting, he went into his quarters, and as soon as he came in he entered his study and barred himself in. No one might go in save he only ; and there he stayed all alone, and in the dark moreover, about a matins' space ; and he never came forth to join the rest but his cheeks were wet with tears. Then he went up into his sleeping room, and when he had gone to bed, a light was brought to him in a lantern, and for long he read the Psalter ; for a very brief space drowsiness stole on him till the bell rang for primes. He read indoors as he dressed and washed. At the bell for fore-mass, he went to church and was in his place while it was chanted, and gave the blessing after mass. Then the bishop went out of and round the church. Every day on which people might be coming, he sat in his consistory to deal with cases and do other needful business, either of people that had come, or concerning the church. This went on till the bell for terces. Then the bishop straightway went out, staying at service till after mass and nones ; then to table. He made all his priests sit over his table, and made them, and all that cared to come, glad with goodly cheer and liquor, either mead or small ale. Always the

bishop drank a cup to each of his priests severally, when he had been let blood; and when good guests came to the house, there was a cup round for each. All double feasts were handsomely drunk; but on all high-days there was no special order, but every one drank as he would. Whether any ship was at Iceland or not, just the same cheer was to be expected at Hólar. With all his guests he dealt handsomely; all of mark sat up in his room, and those that sat by him were to drink as they listed, each man no more than he pleased. Those who were more eager to drink were none the more sought after, so that it was their own fault who were the worse for it. He made the priests always keep Yule-feast handsomely, and all the clergy, lay-prebendaries, bailiff, and housekeeper, and all the servants; so that all had cheer enough. At Easter the entertainment was moderate, likewise on high-days during Lent. Lord Laurence had such foresight that he laid in the drinkables from wherever in Iceland he could get them. He always had shares in two or three ships faring to Iceland; his managers were Grafar-Leif and Eirek the 'Red.' Most commonly Hólar church owned something in the ships that came to Iceland. He gave his trusty men charge over his cellar; Ketil Hallsson for the two first years of his coming to Iceland, and afterwards Deacon Einar, who kept it afterwards all the time Laurence was bishop. Daily after the meal, he first walked and then went into his study and studied books: he wrote on his waxen tablets and noted what he

especially wished to take from the books, and then Deacon Einar wrote it out in a quire or book, to be at hand for the bishop when he wished to look at it and have it before him. No man might come up into his quarters without asking leave; a porter was appointed to watch the lodging by day and also by night. Whenever it began to get dark in the winter, Deacon Einar would tell to the bishop in Norse lives of the saints, or would sometimes read Latin stories till the vesper bell; at the first ringing the bishop would go straight out to church, reading requiems with the clergy as he went. After evensong the bishop went home to his quarters and then to table. He always made some cleric read a lesson before his table; most commonly Óblaud Thorsteinsson, deacon, did so. In the evening, after the meal, the bishop walked about the floor at bathing-time, and then went to his bed and had his longest sleep straight on till matins. Lord Laurence never came into the monastery, save sometimes when he was told that dancing was going on in the evenings. Then he had a lantern borne before him into the great room, forbidding each and all to have dancing there in the monastery. Much zeal showed Lord Laurence about the conduct of the clerks, the cut of their hair and dress; and against their making any show there in his diocese: also about their way of life, especially where he thought there was excess; also about those people who, either by way of adultery or incest, lived together forbiddenly.

46. It is not to be forgotten, but rather to be

made known to righteous men, how many and how goodly charities he had endowed from the goods of the church at Hólar while he was bishop. All the provost's revenue that came in by fines or other penalties, he gave to the poor who needed it sorest, most of all to those who had before had a household ; to lepers, blind folk, or those who had the worst sickness. For this he appointed a priest to exact the provost's revenue ; Sir Paul Thorsteinsson had the place first, and then Sir Björn Ófeigsson. To these the bishop gave for their trouble such a share of the income as he thought good ; and so it stood during his life. This was a mighty help to many poor people, and every one paid in with goodwill. Twelve almsmen he established there at Hólar and in the storehouses of the church ; these were both fed and clad. In Lent five paupers were taken in

and stayed on till over Easter-week. On  
Sep. 29 Michaelmas Day in autumn, the steward had to measure off two thousand four hundred in wadmal, and this had to be given to the poor for keeping through the winter, and till after Whitsun-week. This the guest-man had to give out and distribute among the paupers whom he thought neediest—or else the bishop directed him—before the highest days. A trusty, benevolent, shrewd man, Thorstein Thorleifsson, was chosen for this. All the goods given yearly in wadmal to the church he had taken home to his quarters, and given to the poor.—Also be it noted, that Laurence had the same apparel as monks wear, a cowl and a long gown outermost ; for he



declared the rule to be, that though bishops were of the black monks' order, they were bound to have the same dress as that of the rule they were chosen to. A shirt of hair and wool he wore next him. He set up a school in the monastery, and had Latin taught. Sir Ólaf Hjaltason then kept the school, and Laurence gave him the living of Vellir church in Svarfadar-dale, saying that whoever was school-master at Hólar should always have that living. Sir Valthjóf taught chanting.

47. During Laurence's first winter at Hólar, there was little tidings all over Iceland. Brother Berg Sokkason was chosen by Lord Laurence  
1324-5 to be abbot at Múnka-Thverá, and consecrated by him at home at Hólar a year later. He was a man of parts beyond most people then in Iceland, in scholarship, handwriting, chanting, and eloquence; and he drew up many histories of the Saints in Norse, which shall be known and famous while this country is peopled. Moreover this good man lived nobly in monastic discipline. Abbot Berg and Bishop Laurence were the dearest of friends, Laurence being Berg's teacher. In the winter before Lent, Lord Laurence sent his son, brother Árni, south to Skálholt to Lord Bishop John, begging him to ordain him to all orders up to that of priest. Brother Árni came north after Whitsun week, now ordained priest. It seemed to Lord Bishop Laurence a finer thing for a father not to lay hands of consecration upon his son after the flesh: nor did brother Árni ever stand by his father, save when he was confirming

the young. Brother Árni was an excellent scholar and versifier, and taught many clerks: he always went with Lord Laurence his father on his visitations, and slept in the same quarters. Also he, and likewise Deacon Einar, had the bishop's signet and the writing of his letters.

48. That same winter, in the autumn before which Bishop Laurence came out, there was a lull in Iceland and no event of note. The aforesaid bishops were in power, Lord John at Skálholt, and Lord Laurence at Hólar. People said that there could never have been better Latin scholars in Iceland than they; also between them at this time was the greatest affection. In the second year of Laurence's bishopric, he, with the counsel of all the learned in Hólar see, enacted that the feast of Corpus Christi should be kept with the festal chanting of a high-day; for this had just been proclaimed by Bishop John. This high-day was made law at the General Moot in summer. In autumn afterwards Lord Laurence performed ordinations at home at Hólar. It was another of the notable things about his rule, that he examined the clergy himself, and himself told them to their faces how it beseemed them to behave in the ordination they were receiving; and most piercingly he overhauled their life and their knowledge before he would go on to consecrate them; he laid most upon the way they chanted or read in Holy Church. Then he said that [those should not] receive holy orders, who expected to have a child and would not declare it; and when this was

discovered he laid heavy penances on them, and made them forfeit his ministrations for a long time.

In the year after Lord Laurence' coming, no ship came to Iceland. In the spring afterwards Abbot Gudmund and Yeoman Benedict Kolbeinsson rode to Hólar. Abbot Gudmund inquired how he would settle about the tithes; a matter that had long been stirring between Thingeyri and the church of Hólar. Thus said Lord Bishop Laurence to Abbot Gudmund:

'There are two ways; one to complain about the tithes before my Lord archbishop; the other, to submit this whole case into our hands to be set straight.' And with good men's counsel the abbot elected that the bishop alone should fix and fashion the affair as he would, having sworn before God that Thingeyri monastery should not be the loser. Then the bishop pronounced that he made over Hvamm in Vatn-dale to the monastery at Thingeyri for a perpetual possession.

'We know well,' said Bishop Laurence, 'that every single bishop of Hólar has so much power and authority over Thingeyri monastery, that the abbots of Thingeyri never lay claim to the tithes of the bishops of Hólar west of Vatn-dale river. But, to the end that our successors may claim no authority over the monastery at Thingeyri, we desire with this gift and bounty to abate all wrangling and complaint while we have any choice in the matter. Also we will write to the archbishop asking him to confirm this our

covenant.' This agreement was sealed by deeds and hand-pledges. Then Lord Laurence also gave to Thingeyri his brother Kálf's donation ; it was four thousand eight hundred<sup>19</sup> worth, and by this gift Lord Bishop Laurence had honour and glory, but the monastery at Thingeyri eternal gain and emolument while Hvamm lasts.

49. Thorstein Kolbeinsson, the brother of Benedict, was now dwelling at Holtastad in Langadale. The Lady Gudrún, daughter of Thorstein, was mother of the two brothers. Thorstein was then unwed, but was keeping a lawless union, for he took Gudrún, Illugi's daughter, to live with him. Thorstein and Thórd Loptsson were fourth cousins. This living together became known, for she became with child. So openly did they go about their union that he took her to his own bed as if she were his lawful wife. Lord Laurence at first admonished him kindly to part with her. But he was hardened in his perverseness and paid no heed to the bishop's admonitions. At last Bishop Laurence proceeded with legal evidence against Thorstein, getting sworn proof of the kinship between the said Thorstein and Thórd, who was the husband of Gudrún before this. Thereafter the bishop gave Thorstein three admonitions, summoning him to Hólar ; the last was summary, and said that if he did not come to the said church, Laurence would excommunicate them on the First Lady-Day there at Hólar, with candles reversed and bell-ringing. And inasmuch as they



came not to the summons, but hardened their hearts, behaving as before, the next thing was that the bishop excommunicated them on Lady-day in the chancel at Hólar, with the form which Holy Church enjoins should be chiefly used against refractoriness. Herein was manifested the singlemindedness and righteousness of the bishop; for the Lady Gudrún and Benedict were his dearest friends, and also Hallbera, the abbess at Stad, the Lady Gudrún's sister. Thorstein also had a large following, being a man very rich in substance. Now it must be told how Thorstein took this procedure and this ban which was going forward at Hólar on Lady-day. When he had come to table at Holtastad, he hid his face in his palms, and then looking up said:

‘Gudrún, methinks I feel that now the bishop at Hólar is chanting a stern song over you and me this day: I will not tangle other folk in my own troubles, and all of you,’ this he said speaking to the people, ‘must eat in here, and I will go hence.’ Then he left the table, ate alone, and slept alone. Before this the bishop had sent away the two priests, for he had dealt ruthlessly with them. For soon after these doings the Lady Gudrún and Benedict rode to Holtstad, and urged Thorstein to be reconciled with Holy Church and the bishop. The pair met the bishop at Vellir in Svarfadardale, and the bishop took the ban off Thorstein; and off Gudrún in Arshaw some days after. They both swore to part, and with God's will part they did. The bishop took

every pains to chastise those under him out of evil ways: but he never banned any other men openly in Hólar see.

50. Especially is it to be named and noted, how Lord Laurence was always saying at the synod of priests, that it went past bounds that those priests, who chanced to be disabled by age or other ailments, should be driven to tramp and beg; the church and her goods helping them hardly at all. Accordingly he founded and ordered an infirmary for priests at Kviá-Beck in Ólafs-Firth, and bought half of the ground from priest Arnod, the church owning the other half. There he laid out a great fund in estate and live stock and farm gear, and also enacted that every priest in the see should contribute half a mark a year for the next three years: this swelled to a great fund. Also over all Ólafs-Firth and all Fljót he had a lamb kept in each house, so that soon as many as fifty were reared, and people ever after yielded them up to the bishop for his estates. None the less did Lord Laurence reserve for the infirmary the fines for misconduct which came in in great suits; as for instance from Benedict Kolbeinsson and Thorstein his brother and other men of means who were liable for heavy penances. He chose Kviá-Beck in Ólafs-Firth for the infirmary, because he thought it was a good place for cod-fish and meat, well fitted for old men's diet. There he made overseer a young priest who had been his pupil of old when he was in Múnka-Thverá, saying he thought he would have ripe judgment in

managing the stock. This was Björn Önundarson, priest, and he stayed steward here while Bishop Laurence lived; and into his hand came good store of all manner of live stock and provisions, so that there was no lack there till Bishop Laurence departed; many priests were then there. This same Björn was long steward at Mödruvellir in the Valley of the Hörg, and was a man of ripe counsel, the words being fulfilled which Laurence foretold of him.

Sir Snjólf landed in the south and rode up to Hólar, having got a letter from some of the canons who entreated Bishop Laurence to make good terms with him. He would not do a reverence to Bishop Laurence, and the bishop replied to his speech not a word. Then he went to seek Bishop John at Skálholt, and offered to minister in his see. John counselled Snjólf to go back to Bishop Laurence.

‘You are bound,’ said Bishop John, ‘to humble yourself before him, seeing he is appointed by God your superior. If you will promise us this, we will even write north unto our brother.’ Snjólf went north to Laurence and made him a reverence, falling on his knees. The bishop asked—

‘Why so little like thyself, compared with what thou wert when here last, Snjólf?’

‘Because,’ he said, ‘now is my neck quit of the iron prong<sup>22</sup>; also Bishop John enjoined upon me that I should yield unto you.’ Then the bishop rose up and set him beside him, and for that day

entertained him, and there was such concord between them, that he gave him the benefice of Háls in Fnjóska-dale, none other being then empty. He could say with truth of Sir Snjólf, that no man dressed or feasted so finely as he; yet never did he assess himself for tithe at more than forty-eight hundred. There was ever a sharpness between them; but it was Snjólf who attacked the bishop with vainglorious words, Once at Múnka-Thverá, when the bishop had come there on a visitation, this happened. When the bishop was at meat Sir Snjólf came in and found a place set for him at a table by the door. Then, as Snjólf got tipsy, there came on him a spirit of cursings and revilings against the bishop. Very long-suffering was Bishop Laurence, answering not a word, and only breaking up the feast after Our Lady had been pledged. That night Snjólf took quite enough to drink, and swelled so big as to be on the brink of peril. Then he was belted about with a linen kerchief, and his writhings seemed to the bystanders piteous to look on. Then he begged for Lord Bishop Laurence to come to him; which he did. Then Sir Snjólf prayed forgiveness for the words he had said in the evening. The bishop said he would give it blithely, and then read over him. And, by God's will, a little after, he mended. Sir Snjólf never again reviled Bishop Laurence in his life.

Lord Laurence bore great friendship to Sir John Kodransson, and gave him a share in the



benefice at Glen Hrafna, and therewith a provostship over Eyja Firth and Dal, as far as the Rift of Vard. He was a most goodly scholar, and had the church at Glen Hrafna mended at such cost, that it would have been long there manifest, had it only been kept up.

51. All the foremost men in Iceland, lay or learned, bore affection to Laurence while he was there. They could borrow from the church on condition that they left gold or refined silver in pawn; and that, if repayment was not forthcoming, the church kept the deposit. Thus the bishop got much treasure by their not redeeming their pledges. The bishop and Skúli Flugumýri lent money to Lord Eirek Sveinbjarnason for four years, he having then the bailiwick over the Northern Quarter. He borrowed over fourteen hundred and forty a year, paying up some in house repairs, more as the church and bishop needed. With rich men the bishop took pains about fixing the tithe, especially with Gizur 'Gall,' yeoman at the Tongue of Vidi-dale; naming three priests and three laymen to value his goods while he was entertaining the bishop. At first Gizur was stubborn against it; but when he saw that a ban hung over him unless the bishop had his way—for the bishop desired him to name three laymen as valuers—it was all settled, and they valued the goods at seven thousand two hundred more than Gizur had before paid tithe on. Not many people had trouble with Gizur after that. Lord Laurence had no respect of persons in chastising,

and found fault with aught which he saw was against God's laws, whether they who did it were rich or poor. It was also notable how, when Benedict or yeoman Rafn or other men of mark were taken in adultery, they had to come to Hólar on Maunday Thursday and be brought up, just like other penitents, in a bearskin; likewise sometimes, on Ash Wednesday they who had more grievously backslidden. But he bade them sit by him at banquet through Easter, and made them welcome. He so managed because he thought that it would bring them to the blush to receive such disgrace publicly for their misdoing, and that they would beware of backsliding again; for they would rather pay a trifle than abase themselves like so many nobodies.

52. In the third year of Lord Laurence's episcopate, brother Íngimund Skútuson came from Norway with writs of Lord Archbishop  
1327 Eilif concerning the case of Möðruvellir; the tenor of his decree was, that Lord John Bishop of Skálholt and Lord Thorlák, abbot at Ver, were appointed by the archbishop judges delegate with power to take evidence, 'and with authority so to decide or quash, that a covenant should be come to in the said suit: also to summon on either side, to wit, on behalf of Laurence Bishop of Hólar Church, and for the accusation on behalf of the brethren of the aforesaid cloister.' And when this decree reached the aforesaid judges, they issued summonses on both sides, namely to Bishop Laurence and the

brethren of the said cloister for the day after the first day of St. Ólaf, at Mödruvellir.

And when all were there assembled, the July 30 brethren, namely brother Thorgeir, brother Thórd, and brother Íngimund, all of that order, lodged their complaint against Bishop Laurence. First then they claimed their monastery, to which they were consecrated; next, that the bishops of Hólar, namely Audun, and now Laurence, had taken all the income of the monastery for the church at Hólar ever since the monastery was burnt; and they had had to provide for themselves like so many laymen. And for the said reasons they craved the judges to deal them justice.

To these things Bishop Laurence made answer, 'All men know that the monastery here at Mödruvellir stood before the fire and before I was chosen bishop. Also the brethren were appointed priestly maintenance. This suit was also pleaded, and this charge brought by brother Íngimund before the archbishop in Norway when we were last there. We, not having acted, have not to answer for our own person. Thus we begin our answer;—in all things are we willing to answer to and obey the archbishop; let his ordinance stand. Our offer is to have the monastery here at Mödruvellir put in repair, with all speed and the best means we can find; likewise that as many brethren be received in as were there when Bishop Jörund departed, with maintenance found in clothing and victual, even as they had in Bishop Jörund's days. We will appoint a prior over the order, and be

ourselves their abbot, and set a steward over the foundation and its funds. In grave matters all is to be done with the counsel of the prior and brethren. This monastery is to be in all matters spiritual and secular according as it was founded by Bishop Jörund of excellent memory.' At these words of Bishop Laurence there was a loud cheer.

Then spoke first Bishop John : 'Brethren, ye have now heard the lord bishop's offer ; it is now for yourselves to choose ; will ye follow up the accusation that is begun, or will ye make a covenant according to his offer ?' The brethren said they would take the way he should counsel them.

John answered, 'We would call some more men of weight to help us.' Then Lord Laurence and his following departed. He had ere that called all the chief scholars in Hólar See, and laymen likewise. After a while Bishop Laurence with his following was called in, and Bishop John spoke then on the brethren's behalf :

'Whereas, lord bishop, you have made offer to the brethren, utterly without compulsion or bond of law ; they desire to choose that you have the monastery repaired with all speed and at fitting charges, as you have abundant means, with furniture and bells found, and all things needful to the ministry and service of Holy Church ; that a prior and warden be appointed over the monastery, clothed and fed in a seemly style ; and that the monastery and brethren be in all ways established as in the days of Bishop Jörund when he first



founded it; and we twain here, judges-delegate appointed by our lord archbishop, consent, confirm, and assure this with our seals.' This covenant was agreed to, all those aforesaid consenting with goodwill and affection, without any compulsion or force. This agreement was made by Bishop John joining their hands, and was ratified after by the hand and seal of either party. The most noble feast was given at Mödruvellir to both the bishops, to Abbot Thorlák, and to all priests and laymen that came. Thence they all rode off together, bishops and all aforesaid; for Lord Laurence invited them all home to Hólar to feast; Bishop John, Abbot Thorlák, and all their following. This was on the first day of St. Ólaf. Lord Laurence gave the goodliest gifts to Bishop John and also to Abbot Thorlák, and they parted the best of friends for the nonce. Thence they rode to Glaumbaer, and yeoman Rafn gave great gifts to John the bishop. After that John rode to Thingeyri, being close friends with Abbot Gudmund, and there also was loaded with goodly gifts. He was at Breidabólstað on the feast of St. Laurence, chanted mass and preached there; and Sir Thorstein gave him goodly gifts. Thus he rode west into his diocese, and this ride of Bishop John's north got him great friends.

53. Now it must be told hōw Bishop Laurence got together carpenters, and had the convent at Mödruvellir done up, providing furniture and bells. 'Apostles' bells and also five 'singing-maids'<sup>23</sup> were brought north from Hólar; and soon this

was finished in so good a style, that it is visible  
unto this day. Thus all went on in  
1328 peace and quietness over the summer  
and right on until the next Lent.

Brother Íngimund, in Lent, rode south to Skálholt, no man at first knowing his business. Brother Thorgeir was appointed prior at Mödruvellir, and Thorkel Grimsson warden. Hard on Passion Week came a messenger from Bishop John with letters—close, short, and sharp. After greeting, it ran thus :

‘Brother Íngimund from Mödruvellir swooped down on us unawares, like a thunderclap, ere we knew it. He brought tidings, Lord Bishop Laurence, that you had not kept the covenant which we struck in summer at Mödruvellir ; wherefore we see nought else fitting for us but to ride north in the summer and decide the said suit once for all.’

Upon this letter Bishop Laurence was vexed and wroth, saying to the man he trusted, that he had hoped better things of Bishop John when they parted last at Hólar than that he would so quickly reverse his love towards him, and trust, without the least evidence, the tales of his foes, that he was breaking the covenant which he and the brethren had made between them, and which, he said, he desired to keep to the last tittle. Further, that the authority of Bishop John and Abbot Thorkel over his covenant with the brethren to decide over the said case, was dead and done with ; and he showed thereon the canon law. And summoning his chief priests he showed them the canon

law upon it. In spring after Easter, on the day of John Bishop of Hólar, he sent Sir Paul Thorsteins-son to Skálholt with letters. He had composed a long letter wherein he set forth certain legal points; namely, Abbot Thorlák and the Bishop had no more authority in the said case to decide, because of the covenant which he had made with the brethren. This letter of Bishop Laurence Sir Paul took to Bishop John, who, as soon as he had read it, was much vexed, saying that for all this letter he would proceed just as before. Then he asked Sir Paul, would he have to write over again what he had writ before, namely, that he would still ride north in summer to decide on the Mödruvellir case? But Sir Paul said he cared not to go back with that letter. Then, said the Bishop, he would not write another. Sir Paul went back to Hólar and told Bishop Laurence that it stood thus. So time went on till after Whitsun-week.

54. On Trinity Sunday two deacons and a man with them came from Skálholt to Hólar. One was deacon Thórd, son of Lawman Gudmund, whom Laurence had taken quite a child at Thingeyri, and taught and spent all his pains on teaching him, so that he was the best Latin scholar and a good versifier; ill it beseemed him to go with any errand contrary to the ordinance given him by Bishop Laurence. The other deacon was called Gregory. These deacons went into the vestry when the bishop was disrobed. Thórd greeted the bishop, saying that he had a letter

and ordinance of Bishop John to read before him. The bishop answered, that he probably had an ordinance which would be little good to Holy Church or to himself: 'Thórd, thou needst not set thyself to read any letters of summons here before me in the church, for I will hear none such.' And when Thórd was purposing to read out the letter, the bishop sprang up and left the vestry and all the clergy with him.

And when Thórd saw this, he said: 'This serves me not; I now see that the bishop will not hear the ordinance of Bishop John.' Bishop Laurence said he would not raise the authority of Bishop John and Thorlák from the dead by listening to any summons of theirs. Then the bishop went to table and asked the deacons to eat with him; they stayed Sunday, and were well feasted with meat and drink. On the morrow after primes, they went to table and gave out that they meant to ride away speedily, and took their horses and saddled them; and as soon as high mass was sung, after offertory at mass, Deacon Thórd went before the Virgin's altar and began the letter, Bishop Laurence sitting in his seat. And when Bishop Laurence heard Thórd begin the letter, he said:—

'Thórd! I forbid thee to read any letter or to make stir or brawling during divine service of mass.' At that instant Sir Valthjóf leapt from his seat and gripped the letter with both hands, thinking to tear it from him. And when the bishop saw it, he called to him—



‘Take not the letter from him, but put them, letter and all, out of the church, so that they brawl not in holy mass.’ Then the clergy flew at them from all sides, and elbowed them out of church, and locked the door behind them. Then Thórd set to reading out the letter in the tower without the church, and afterwards nailed it up on the church door with iron nails. Then they jumped on their horses which they had tied outside the churchyard, and halted not till they reached Skálholt, and told Bishop John how it had fared with their journey, and spared no word of the tale how they had been haled perforce out of church, but hid utterly how the bishop had made them welcome. Little pleased was Bishop John; but priests and learned men saw the letter fixed on the church door at Hólar and read it. This letter was in Latin, a fine composition, and showing the surpassing scholarship of Bishop John. The tenor of the said letter was, that Lord John and Thorlák, being judges by Archbishop Eilif appointed, summoned Bishop Laurence to Mödruvellir, in the Hörg Valley, on the plaint of the brethren to hear their judgment between the church of Hólar and the convent of Mödruvellir. The day of summons was the morrow of the translation of St. Benedict.

55. Now to tell how Lord John and Abbot Thorlák made ready to journey north over the land. With them travelled Lord Ketil and many great men both lay and learned; and they reached Mödruvellir ere the summoning day, bringing their

own victual and drink ; yet Lord Laurence had arranged a handsome entertainment for them. Bishop Laurence summoned to his side the chief priests, Sir Thorstein 'Shardstone,' Sir Egil, Sir John, Sir Eirik 'Bowl.' He had meant to visit over the northern quarter, but stayed in Lauf Ridge as the day of meeting drew near. There he treated and took counsel with his priests about what was best to do. All agreed that he ought to go to Mödruvellir on the day of summons ; as it seemed likely that the judges would proceed each to his decision, which would damage the church at Hólar in default of any man to speak for it ; and it seemed also likely that they would say he was disloyal to the archbishop, and either interdict him or summon him before the archbishop. He showed them the canon law, declaring that the people had no authority to give judgment after the covenant was once made between him and the brethren ; and said that he had in no wise broken that. The end was that Bishop Laurence went by his priests' counsel, and accompanied them by ship over to Mödruvellir.

Laurence and the bishop met in the church, and Lord Laurence was moving forward to kiss him ; but he drew back, saying : 'Is it true that you have bidden them lay hands on my deacons in the church at Hólar and thrust them out ?'

'I do not own that I bade lay hands on them ; but this I own, that I forbade them to brawl in holy church ; also it was not to my liking to hear your letter.'

‘It is told me,’ said Bishop John, ‘that two men did lay hands on them, and they were your priest Valthjóf and your scribe called Sigurd ‘Pruning-knife’; them I hold excommunicate, and I will have no commerce with them till they are cleared; but whereas you do not own that you commanded it, I will not go so far against you.’

Then many good men tried their best to make a compromise between them. In the evening, Bishop John chose to sit at meat by his own people, Laurence sitting in another room with his. Next morning both bishops went into the bishop’s study, and all the chief men were summoned thither. The men from the south had a great load of canon law-books which had been brought north. Bishop John opened his speech in Latin, saying to all that understood what had passed in the Mödruvellir case, and bidding Lord Laurence answer.

Lord Laurence spoke in Norse. ‘We all know, Lord John, that you have as fine a flow of Latin as of your mother-tongue. But it is not understood of the people. Therefore, let us talk clearly so that all may understand. Thus, then, clearly say I; that I will keep and abide by the covenant made last summer. Let it be proved in any jot, that I or my steward have started from it, and then I will amend joyfully.’ At this speech of his there was a loud cheer.

Bishop John answered: ‘That deed which was drawn last summer we call a deed of your sharp

practice, and we think that it cannot stand ; for the rules of St. Augustine fix, that an abbot or prior who is put in command of the monastery shall have authority both in secular and spiritual things ; and therefore we, judges in this case set and appointed, hold to the prescription of the rules, that the brethren here at Mödruvellir should have authority in secular things even as within their walls they have in spiritual. And so it stands far and wide in monasteries over all the world ; for it beseems not that the brethren be the almsmen of laymen serving God as they do night and day. We twain with God's will shall be disposed to give judgment and decision thereon, if the brethren are not to get hold of the rents and maintenance which the rules ordain ; superiors being merely appointed to have power of control over the goods which belong to the church. Now, if a prior is appointed here at Mödruvellir over the brethren, and is to have no power over their goods of this world ; suppose that the brethren were to ask him for necessary vesture or victuals, he refers them to the bishop at Hólar, their abbot, and the bishop refers to his steward. But it is a long day's journey between the bishop's seat at Hólar and the monastery at Mödruvellir, and the brethren cannot suffer lack for ever. Secondly, the prior has to require zeal in discipline. Some brethren being obedient, some disobedient, it is for the prior to comfort the obedient with every indulgence that it is fitting should comfort their hearts, and to better their discipline. But now



he has nothing to do with it ; the bishop's steward at Hólar rules all the funds, and will not yield whatever the prior settles. Do not then the obedient brethren lose their comforts? and like enough they may fly into league with the malcontents. We twain, judges by the archbishop appointed, will never consent to the prior and brethren not having full power over secular things, even as Bishop Jörund has ordained. And though in his main plan of the monastery his scheme has been goodly, yet it is fitting enough to mend any flaw there may be in his handiwork.' Lord Bishop John spoke so finely with all his eloquence that to many there it looked like the law that the prior and brethren should have full power in secular things.

56. Bishop Laurence said he would stand by the covenant which the brethren and he had made in the summer before ; and the longer the bishops parleyed, the stiffer grew Lord Bishop John. Bishop Laurence begged leave from the meeting to confer with his priests ; and when this was got from Bishop John, Lord Laurence asked the priests and other trusty men of his, what was the wisest way to take in the said case. But they all threw it back upon Laurence himself ; some however gave ill counsel ; but he felt himself the spirit in which it was tendered.

Then said Bishop Laurence : 'I see how this case will go ; if Bishop John and Abbot Thorlák persist in their decision, adjudging all authority to the brethren over secular matters at Modru-

vellir, it seems to us somewhat doubtful that the archbishop would reverse that decision. But even though, for peace and quietness, it is our doing that the brethren have temporal control over their funds, it seems to us more likely that the archbishop would annul that disposition of ours, if he thought it unbecoming, and then there would be some hope of his choosing the covenant to be kept to which we made last summer.' So this point of his plan was decided, namely, to obstruct the decision, and risk it. Then he sent on to them two of his priests, who came back with the message that on this occasion they must go themselves. Bishop Laurence went into the room, and then the brethren were summoned. Bishop John asked Laurence to what agreement he would come with the brethren.

'I will choose—what many will put down as puny in me—to agree that the brethren at Mödruvellir shall have authority in temporal things, rather than that we wrangle; provided the archbishop lets this settlement stand.' <sup>24</sup>

The brethren agreed to keep this covenant; it was ratified with hand-pledging that the Lord prior should have all authority over the foundation and all the property, whether land or chattels, without the walls even as within. Thorgeir was made prior, and Bishop Laurence had all the property in land and chattels made over to him, and the funds were written off the funds of Hólar church. And when this was done, Lord John, Abbot Thorlák, Lord Ketil and all the Southrons, rode

south on the fell. It was in all the people's mouth that Bishop Laurence had let himself sing quite small to the Southrons. The bishops parted cordially, as it was right they should in public; yet not with such hearty affection as in the summer before. Bishop Laurence visited over the northern district till Lady-day. There were then two ships to Gáseyri bound to Norway that summer.

57. Now to tell how Bishop Laurence called to him Sir Egil of Grenjadarstad, and among other things spoke thus in his ear:—‘Everybody knows how ill the Mödruvellir suit turned out last summer; I had to yield before the great power against me, though I thought I was right in my case. But I like it ill, that the case should remain like this—namely, the brethren at Mödruvellir having to rule the whole property. They will squander ignorantly and foolishly all the funds which Bishop Jörund gave away from those of Hólar church, and into the clutches of fools; while the agreement made last summer is made void and a dead letter now, Sir Egil, my disciple, seeing that thou art best and foremost trusted to do my will, I have thought of a journey to Norway in summer for thee, with letters from me to the archbishop on business, touching the Mödruvellir case.’

Sir Egil answered: ‘I feel that I have received much good of you, and that I should be most bounden to do your will towards all men. Yet I know that I have myself neither scholarship, knowledge, nor eloquence enough to go forward

with this business; this above all, because such mighty men have been there to preside over this case; and also because you have now consented and ratified with your own seal that the brethren should themselves have the secular power. I perceive it will prove a hard matter to take that deed back.'

'Thou knowest,' said Bishop Laurence, 'that I did that for peace and quietness; consented, I mean, to the second settlement; for I saw that the church of Hólar would take harm irreparable, if Bishop John and Thorlák had adjudged the management of the funds to the brothers, and much property to boot.'

At last, Bishop Laurence begging and bidding him to go, he said: '*Mighty is the master's word; I will do as you will.*'

At this the bishop rejoiced greatly, and straight-way passage for Sir Egil and his page was taken at Gáseyri. Lord Laurence sent the archbishop goodly gifts, and the whole case written out, and both the covenants, by Egil's hand. He wrote a schedule which he had compiled from the canon law; showing how after the first covenant was made, the power of the deputy judges was over, and they had no more to do with the case. And when the ship was ready to go, Sir Egil took leave of Laurence. They soon had a fair wind and a good voyage after they put to sea, and reached Norway near Throndhjem. Sir Egil went with all speed to meet the archbishop, and made over to him the letter, the announcement, and the gifts of



Bishop Laurence. All this the archbishop took in good part, asking him to winter there with one lad in his manor and at his charges. Sir Egil  
1328-9 accepted, and sat through the winter on a steward's chair, in high favour.

58. On the other hand it is to be told how Lord John heard that Bishop Laurence was sending Sir Egil on a voyage; and it seemed likely to him that he was going about the Mödruvellir case. So he sent the priest whom he deemed foremost in his see, Sir Arngrím Brandsson, who had the benefice of Oddastad. Bishop John and Abbot Thorlák wrote about Mödruvellir, giving account of the last covenant made between Bishop Laurence and the brethren, and praying the archbishop to stablish and ratify that settlement. Sir Arngrim took ship, had a good voyage, reached Norway, went with all speed to the archbishop's presence, and gave him the letters of Bishop John and Abbot Thorlák. The archbishop took it well, asked Sir Arngrím up to his manor with one lad, to have his keep there through the winter, and made him sit on the steward's bench. The steward gave both messengers one loft to sleep in, and they loved one another like two brothers after the flesh. During the winter their behaviour was different. Sir Egil got into the archbishop's good graces as often as he could, pleading his case and the arguments of which Laurence had already given him notes. The archbishop soon perceived that Sir Egil was a great scholar and lawyer, and Sir Egil was always in the archbishop's study at

his ear, pleading about the Mödruvellir case, and showing to him how well the covenant which they had made, Bishop Laurence on one side, and the brethren of Mödruvellir on the other, had been kept in every tittle; how he had had their monastery mended, and a church put up, with bells and furniture, and proper maintenance all found. All this Sir Egil showed to the archbishop under the hand and seal of excellent priests and likewise of laymen; and the end soon was that the archbishop believed his pleading utterly. But Sir Arngrim spent his days otherwise, going daily to an organ-master then in Throndhjem, and he had so many lessons on the organ that he never pleaded about the Mödruvellir case before the archbishop. The messengers had the best of entertainment from the archbishop through the winter.

59. Now to tell of what went on in Iceland after they had gone to Norway. When the brethren at Mödruvellir took control over the funds, all went improvidently. Uppsala-Hrólf, and many yeomen over the Hörg Valley and Eyja Firth were mixed up with Prior Thorgeir; and it was costly, because they and their followers were often entertained at Mödruvellir. But the brethren supposed that they did not receive from Bishop Laurence the funds which—so they thought—belonged of old to Mödruvellir. The bishop said, that they had enough to take care of, and that they were mismanaging the funds which he had made over to them. The bishop was in high displeasure that laymen were mixed up with

them. In the winter after Yule Prior Thorgeir rode away from Möðruvellir, meaning to go south to Skálholt. He lodged at Reykir in Skaga Firth, where Sir Thorleif then dwelt, the best harp-player in Iceland. During the night he stayed there, it came to pass that all the letters which he had in his keeping, and which had been stored in the same building as their saddles, were stolen from him. Many yeomen from Eyja Firth and the Hörg Valley had sent letters by the prior south to Bishop John of Skálholt. It was laid to the charge of Sir Björn Ófeigsson, who had then the provostship over Skaga Firth, that he had sent thither the gallants of his following to get at the letters, and that he had taken them to the bishop: but this talk was never proved. Prior Thorgeir went south to Skálholt, and there met Lord Bishop John at home, who welcomed him heartily, and there some nights he stayed. At last, before Prior Thorgeir took his leave, Lord John the bishop had a very splendid gilt chalice brought out, and also a pair of copes; he said: 'These treasures we wish to give to the church at Möðruvellir and to St. Augustine's monastery, for an everlasting possession, for atonement of our sins and for our soul's health; we would fain do this so that no man may truly say that we have in any wise despoiled the monastery, or taken any bribe to back up the brethren in their suit against Bishop Laurence; nay, we see nought surer in the sight of God, than that the brethren should have full power over their

goods, without as within the walls, any man notwithstanding.'

Prior and bishop parted right cordially. The things which Bishop John gave to the church at Mödruvellir are to be seen within it. The prior returned from his ride south; and Bishop Laurence was displeased that he had gone into another See and not first asked his leave. Uppsala-Hrólf and his following, yeomen from Eyja Firth and the Hörg Valley, were offended with Bishop Laurence, because the letters which they had sent with Prior Thorgeir to Bishop John had been stolen, and they laid it to Laurence' charge. But this could not be said with any truth; for he never knew of the prior's ride south till Sir Björn told him of it.

60. In the spring after Easter, Bishop Laurence called his friends to him, both priests and laymen, and made known to them that he wished to ride North to Mödruvellir, and see how the brethren there were behaving in their walk; for news had come that there was lack at Mödruvellir of meat and hay. Bishop Laurence rode North on Heljar-dale heath, and reached Mödruvellir on the day which he had named before in his letter. As many as forty men were there, Uppsala-Hrólf and yeomen from the Vale of Hörg and Eyja Firth. No procession was made to meet the bishop, but there stood the aforesaid yeomen armed. First the bishop and his people went to the church; there was no sort of greeting for them from the brethren. At meal-time the bishop sat



in the great room ; it was so disposed that the yeomen sat on one dais, and the bishop and his people on another ; and the yeomen had from the brethren far better cheer than the bishop and his people. There the bishop stayed one night ; not speaking to the brethren, nor they to him. Thence Bishop Laurence rode to Múnka-Thverá, and stayed two nights there ; there was the finest feast made for him by Abbot Berg. It was said when he rode from Mödruvellir, that he would ride back westwards on Óxna-dale's Heath, and not go to Mödruvellir. But the bishop would not change his course like this. From Múnka-Thverá he rode back to Mödruvellir. The brethren had sent away the crowd ; and Benedict Kolbeinsson and his lads were with the bishop. In the evening meat was given to the bishop and his folk. On the morrow Laurence went to the chapter and brethren, and asked the prior to show him the stores and hay and sheep. The prior and brethren said they would show him neither stores nor hay nor anything else. The bishop asked for the keys, but could not get them. The bishop said that he would not be answerable before God for their waste of the church funds, but that the church at Hólar was bound to make restitution of any shortness in the funds. Then the bishop made his clergy take the keys from them by force, and had an inspection forthwith of the stores ; and it was seen that there was no provisions either of meat or hay. He set a steward to manage the stores, and even appointed a prior

also, Steindór the brother of Abbot Berg. Prior Thorgeir he took along with him perforce, and got the whole management of the monastery in his hands before he went home to Hólar. Many said what sharp practice it seemed in Bishop Laurence to take into his hand the whole temporal administration of the brethren, before any news came of the way the archbishop chose to settle it, or whether he leaned more to the mission of Sir Egil or to that of Sir Arngrim on Bishop John's behalf. Bishop Laurence said he knew full well that the archbishop's will would be to let the covenant stand which was made in the summer before; this he said he knew by his dreams, and likewise by his heart's boding. The word goes—'*Sooth for the soothsayer,*' and so it was here. Many said that he seemed very bold, while it was doubtful how the archbishop would award on the case.

61. Now to tell what passed in Norway, the bishop's messengers being in the archbishop's manor through the next winter. Sir Egil pled his bishop's—Lord Bishop Laurence's—message whenever he could before the archbishop; but Sir Arngrím gave more heed to picking up organ-playing, and did not think to plead before the archbishop about the course of the Mödruvellir case. In spring, after Easter, Sir Egil came before the archbishop and said that time was flying, that he had a long journey before him, first south to Bergen and thence to Iceland; there being no passage to Iceland then from Throndhjem. The

archbishop took it well, and said that he should get done whatever business he wished. He had the canon summoned, who was most skilled in writing letters in Latin, and told him what the business was to be. 'Sir Egil shall stay with you and tell you the whole case to the bottom.' The master did the archbishop's bidding, and next day the canon showed to the archbishop the writ, which was written in lordly Latin. Thereupon the archbishop thanked him for making the writ. This man was named Hákon Úlfsson; he was the archbishop's souvenir and had his seal.

The archbishop said to him: 'This writ thou shalt seal and hand to Sir Egil, Bishop Laurence' messenger; thou shalt keep it quiet till he is gone from our presence; for we desire to hear and allow no dispeace or prying or party-feuds in a case like this: let this out, and if we come to know it thou shalt lose our friendship, and lose thy place which thou holdest under us.'

Hákon Úlfsson sealed the writ; he was so disloyal to his lord that he showed that open writ ere he brought it to Sir Egil, to one of the chapter there in the manor. That same canon asked the archbishop, Was it true that he had made an end of the Icelandic Mödruvellir case? The archbishop asked who had told him that; at first he tried to hide it; but afterwards he had to tell the archbishop that Hákon Úlfsson had shown him the letter. One day the archbishop called his canons together into his public hall, and told them himself the whole Mödruvellir case; how it had fared

with the covenant which Bishop Laurence and the brethren of Mödruvellir had made the summer before, according to the plan and first foundation of Bishop Jörund, of excellent memory. And he now declared before the canons, that that settlement ought immutably to stand.

‘And we will confirm and ratify the same with our archiepiscopal authority, and will not uphold any other agreement that has been come to over there.’

Then the archbishop had read out the writ which he had issued thereon, and all the chapter gave consent to this judgment, together with the archbishop. This done, Sir Egil took hearty leave of Archbishop Eilif, who gave him at parting a fair silver basin and the canon-law book called *Tancred*. Sir Egil left the archbishop’s presence in great state, but Sir Arngrim kept in the background, seeing that the archbishop was utterly resolved that the suit should go in the way now proclaimed. But, for the disloyalty done by Hákon Úlfsson, the archbishop had him cast into a dungeon, and never after did he keep the said Hákon by him in any trust.

62. South to Bergen went Sir Egil, and lit on a ship trading to Iceland. They had a fair voyage, and reached Eyri safe and sound before St. Laurence’ Day; two nights after St. Laurence’ Day, Sir Egil got home to Hólar, and Bishop Laurence rejoiced at his coming. And when Sir Egil showed him the writ and decree of the archbishop, and how the Mödruvellir suit had gone, he thanked God for it, and likewise Sir Egil for



his true and sturdy heed of his master's business ; the archbishop having written how loyally he had done it. Then Bishop Laurence had the writ put from Latin into Norse to be discerned and understood of the people. Much glory Bishop Laurence got from the result of this lawing. Later the writ was read out in the chancel in the sermon, and also before the brethren at Mödruvellir, and was made known abroad elsewhere. The maligners of Bishop Laurence were very dumb now. Sooth to say, each of the bishops had much to say for his own side of the case. Lord John wished that the laws should be kept ; for the laws and rules of St. Augustine really are that the brethren should control secular things without the walls even as within they control the conduct and discipline ; and that it is unseemly for them to be almsmen of laics ; as Lord Bishop John himself bore witness at Mödruvellir, and as is told above in the history. Whereas Bishop Laurence wished to hold by the state things were in when Bishop Jörund first founded the monastery. Therefore they who hear this history must not blame or blemish either of the aforesaid bishops in this matter, for each most likely thought he was upholding the just cause. Nor was the way in which the archbishop chose to judge this case any discredit to Bishop John in the end. Never again could Bishops John and Laurence have the old cordiality, but Bishop John showed high displeasure at the way the archbishop had dealt with the Mödruvellir case. Bishop Laurence now took unto him the whole power at

Mödruvellir, appointing them an overseer, and dealing with the brethren in all ways according to the bidding and ordinance of Bishop Jörund when he founded the monastery. But the yeoman who had meddled with the brethren, the bishop proclaimed under ban; namely Uppsala-Hrólf. The tenor of the charges made by those who passed between the Bishop and Hrólf was this:—the bishop was told that Hrólf had made with the priest Klaeng Hjaltason a privy bargain for Klaeng's wife Arnbjörg. This was not clearly proven, but witness was alleged to be forthcoming that Klaeng had taken Hrólf's money. It happened later that the bishop brought many charges against Hrólf and put him out of the church. Hrólf stayed under this ban till Bishop Laurence died. Bishop Laurence wished to keep the laws of Holy Church, with whomsoever he had to deal. But he also looked narrowly to penances, as might be shown from a thing that befell in his days. A cleric, consecrated sub-deacon, born in Fnjóskadale, went to the East Firths, and came into the district of Fljóts-Dale, and so to Valthjófstad. And when he had come there he was so puffed up with great wickedness and monstrous foolhardiness, that he gave himself out for a mass-deacon and asked to read the gospel at mass. A stole was brought him, and when he began to read the gospels, all the lights went out in the church, and as often as the people there tried to light them, it was just as if a blast came on them. The deacon's lesson went on, but the lights could

not be kindled ; this seemed a strange thing to the people there, but at first they suspected nought from it. Also he betook himself to another church to read the gospel, and all went as at Valthjóf's church ; all the lights went out and could not be kindled. A suspicion now sprang up that he was only consecrated a sub-deacon, and not a mass-deacon. This was told to Bishop John ; then he told his provost to make the man go, little as he might like it, west to Hólar. This was done, and the man owned that he had twice publicly read the gospel in mass. It seemed to Lord Bishop Laurence that the case appertained to Bishop John, because the man had sinned in John's diocese. So he sent the deacon south to John and two men with him that he might not give them the slip anywhere. Then Bishop John sent a letter by him north to Bishop Laurence, giving him authority by letters-patent to set the man a fitting penance and absolve him. This, among other things, was the penance the bishop set him ; six mass-deacons were each to whip him on the bare back so smartly that the blood came. For the bishop proclaimed that with unheard-of presumption he had intruded into the deacon's office ; and therefore it was right for him to be smitten by deacons, whose office he took upon him without holy ordination. Then he absolved the cleric, telling him that he should never be legally ordained unless the pope gave him dispensation. Also it came about that this deacon got the name of "Gadding" Árni.

In the year when these things happened, sad news came of a fire at Christ Church in Nidarós of all the woodwork; and the wall split in many places, the bells were destroyed and many treasures besides. The archbishops wrote of this mishap to the bishops in Iceland. An offering was asked for the church over all the country, and much money given.

63. At this time Bishop Laurence employed a goldsmith called Eyjólf, a good craftsman. Bishop Laurence made him work two very splendid gospel books for the church at Hólar, which can yet be seen there; also a goodly chalice. The bishop got angry with him for the high wages of his smith's work; they seemed more than their worth. The bishop

1329  
Sept. 29

bargained with the goldsmith that he should come back in the autumn on Michaelmas day, and work Laurence's shrine there through the winter. In the spring, close on St.

June 17

Botolph's Eve, a ship from Norway touched at Gáseyri, and over this ship was Berg Jónsson, the archbishop's steward. The ship came from Throndhjem. The said Berg came to Hólar and brought Bishop Laurence a very goodly mitre which Lord Archbishop Eilif sent him, and two boxes therewith holding balsam: this mitre is now the best at Hólar. Such a thing showed what affection the archbishop bore to him. In recompence for this he gave thirty bales of wadmal, and asked Berg to stay the winter at Hólar, which he accepted. In winter Bishop



Laurence visited over the western district. He was at Kúla at the wedding feast of John and Íngigerd, and most of the great men in Iceland were there. Lord Bishop Laurence preached there, and his loving yet devout way of discourse was the admiration of many discerning people. On

Michaelmas Day there was a spell of frost

Oct. 13 and snow, and Bishop Laurence said that he was sure the winter would be hard.

Then he came to Hólar on the Feast of Relics.

Then it came to pass that Hallbera, abbess at Stad, died. Bishop Laurence was then summoned, and sent word that he would come to

Jan. 13, 1330 the sisters after Yule, nigh on Epiphany; as was done. Then Sister Gudný, daughter of Helgi, was chosen abbess, but was only consecrated by Bishop Egil, successor of Bishop Laurence.

64. This winter was most bitter weather. There was scant hay and much live stock in the church farm. Bishop Laurence had written  
1329-1330 home to Steward Skúli that he was to kill a good deal, for he said at Michaelmas that he thought the winter would be hard. Skúli complied not with the bishop's words, and had no greater a killing than common. In winter came the time for the ewes to be in heat, but the earth was snowbound. The bishop admonished Skúli to slaughter the cattle; for it was now reported that the stock of the church was without food. Skúli took little heed of the bishop's words, and fewer were slain than ever.

After Yule brother Árni took a great sickness, and was down a long time through the  
1331 winter. Great searchings of heart had Lord Bishop Laurence because of his shocking way of life, all in the teeth of cloister discipline. In the winter on the day of  
March 3 the translation of Bishop John, it came to pass, that great pains troubled him ; and as soon as Bishop Laurence prayed over brother Árni, he mended.

Once in Lent the bishop came to him, and spoke very sternly to him, admonishing him to repent of his courses, and saying thus : ‘ If thou wilt vow to God and to me that thou wilt go straightway back to the monastery at Thingeyri, when thou lovest me, then I will dare—though thou deserve it not—to pray God for thee that thou mend of this sickness. For in the monastery at Thingeyri thou canst live very cleanly, canst teach and write. But if it is in thy mind to break this our bidding, and to go to Norway when thou lovest us, then thy counsel cannot thrive, for we know that thou wilt fall to swilling and other iniquity, and then Holy Church gets no good of thy parts.’

The bishop ceased not till Árni was touched and wept bitterly, promising to go back to Thingeyri and abide there, as soon as he lost the bishop. Which promise of his was kept less than beseemed him ; for his course of life was even as his father foretold. The weather began to worsen, and times continued to be hard ; at last the sheep

dropped down for leanness like drifting waves. It had been better to follow the will of Bishop Laurence and slay them while there was flesh on them, than that no man should have good of them. Laurence was a man of such foresight that much went according as he foretold.

65. On the eve of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, when Bishop Laurence was thinking of going to evensong, he felt

March 19 heavy and ill just as the bell was going, and said to his close friend, Deacon Einar Haflidason, that he could not go out to evensong, but begged him to go and chant, some of the clergy being ill. This sickness which Lord Laurence then took, grew on him from day to day, so that he ate well nigh nothing, which was a drain upon his strength. Yet he went every day to High Mass, leaning upon Deacon Einar. Lady Day was that year the Monday in the last week of Lent. Ill as

he was, he never broke his dry fast. On March 31 Easter Day he was at offices, sitting in his seat; had mass said to him in the vestry, and received the Lord's Body. Through the day he did not sit indoors with the priests. But at evening he grew worse. And when the rest were gone to sleep, he roamed about the timber hall, and got himself upon the daïs. He sent Deacon Einar out to see where the star had reached,<sup>25</sup> and when the deacon came back, the bishop said to him :

‘Friend, I dreamed a dream. I thought I was lying on the daïs, and I held up my right hand.

And methought I had in my hand the bone of a saint ; it was a long bone, and I thought I would have that bone kept in St. Laurence's shrine.'

Now the bishop had made Eyjólf the goldsmith make in the winter that shrine which now may be seen above the high altar at Hólar.

Deacon Einar answered : 'This is a perfect dream and a devout.'

The bishop answered : 'In my hand, there, I had a hard feeling, for the bone is hard ; and that will be a token of my sickness.'

Next day, in Easter week, he went very ill into his study, sat in his chair, and bade Deacon Einar

drag out a great chest, giving him the

1331, key to open it. The bishop himself had  
April 1 the key to this chest, the deacon having  
keys to all others in the wardrobe. Him

he bade take up everything from the chest and lay it out on the floor. Then the deacon counted out fifty pence, two rosaries of silver, weighing thirty-seven marks, twenty-three silver spoons, five brooches and three locketts, some old, broken silver, and a few English pennies. These weighed twenty-six marks and a quarter. Also there were a chalice, a silver belt, three girdles, and tablets of walrus tusk. Besides, he took out of a box ten gold rings, having summoned Skúli the steward.

Then said the bishop to him and the deacon : 'Here may ye see what things I have got and gathered for the church here at Hólar since I have been bishop. To this have gone my bishop's tithes. Some of these I have bought ; some, good



friends of mine have given me, and I have gathered what I thought would best suit the church.'

Then answered Skúli: 'The church would seem to me to want meat and live beasts more than these.'

'Say not so, Skúli,' said the deacon, 'nothing can be more precious or needful to the church than gold or refined silver, for with this refined silver and gold the bishop can have many a blessed thing wrought to deck the church withal, if he will have a shrine or altar-piece made over the high altar.'

Then the bishop spoke: 'What you two were heard to say just now came verily from your wisdom. Thou, Skúli, hast not looked well after the live stock of the church, so that they have starved and perished, and there is no use of them. But this which you see now perishes not unless it be wasted of men.'

Then the bishop bade them put the things back as before. Sir Laurence sent a man west to Breidabolstad to Sir Thorstein with a letter bidding him come north with all speed. Another letter was sent to Grenjadarstad to Sir Egil, bidding him come to Hólar as swiftly as he might. Sir Thorstein came on the Sunday áfter Easter,

April 7 and the bishop rejoiced much at him.

April 8 On Monday the bishop announced to Sir Thorstein that he wished to make his will and all his dispositions; saying he foresaw that he would depart because of this sickness. Then he told how he disposed about himself. Sir Egil was

not yet come. Sir Thorstein Illugason he made his Official and vicar in spiritual things till another bishop came to look after them. The clergy then staying on the foundation were to have their table there till another bishop came. There were also other such elsewhere, which made eight or nine poor clergy whom he had taken from poverty and beggary and had taught the psalter and chanting and Latin, so that then they were as good priests as the rest. To the church of Thingeyri and to Múnka-Thverá he made a gift, twelve hundred to each monastery, and likewise twelve hundred to the brethren at Mödruvellir for their comfort. Also all the almsmen were to stay on the foundation and in its outlying parts till another bishop came. To Sir Thorstein he gave twenty yards of cloth, twelve hundred worth of stuff, and a goodly gold ring; to each of the choir priests a goodly gown. To Steward Skúli he gave fifteen yards of cloth and a coat.

To Deacon Einar he thus spoke: 'Our parting is now other than I had meant; for I had meant to consecrate thee priest and give thee some such rich benefice as thou deservest. As it is, we will give thee, for thy comfort, and in return for thy loyal and trusty service to us, a whole suit of cloth, two tabard-kirtles with a hood. For this shalt thou measure out of the wardrobe thirty ells of linen, also thou shalt have whatever pillow for thy head thou chooseth, and a pair of shoes. Thou deservest better for thy trusty service to us, and we bid you, Sir Thorstein, my friend, to send him

south to Skálholt and have him consecrated by Bishop John, so that he be hereafter choir priest here at home till a bishop come. He has been my one pupil who has never done aught against me while he has been in my service.'

To everybody at the church he gave some keep-sake: to each of the deacons six ells of linen: to Sölvi, the house-steward, six hundred; to Gudrún, the stewardess, eight yards of red cloth and a psalter, to Thórir Isleifson, the guestman, a hundred and twenty; to Sigurd, the cook, a mortgage, north in Myrk-Water. Brother Áрни, his son, he appointed to go back to his monastery at Thingeyri, sending a letter by him to Abbot Gudmund to say what he bequeathed to the monastery of the treasure which he had: this was nearly eighteen hundred, and his clothes and books to boot. All

this was done on the Monday; on the  
April 9 Tuesday he made his confession to Sir Thorstein. Then were called all the clerks and those of the servants at the church who cared to attend. Sir Thorstein gave him extreme unction, and before he was anointed the bishop spoke again, declaring, concerning the people he had put under the ban, namely Uppsala-Hrólf and his train, that they should so remain till another bishop arrived; unless they were to swear to stand to the judgment of Holy Church, in which case the Official was to absolve them. After this speech of the bishop he was anointed: and when the body of God was brought to him he made a discourse so long and beautiful that many who were

there wept, and himself most. Now on Tuesday, when, as we have said, the unction was over, his strength sank and sank; nevertheless he read his offices, and ever through his illness he had read unto him the *Expositiones* of St. Gregory the pope and the prayers of Augustine; and while he was ill, he wept so sorely, especially when such things were read before him, that the tears were never dry on his cheeks.

On Friday in that week Sir Egil came to Hólar, and when he and the bishop met the  
April 12 bishop rose up in his bed to receive him and embraced him with joy. Then they spoke together of many things known to none else.

The bishop showed him how he had appointed all things, and Sir Egil thought it wise in every jot. On Saturday the bishop bade Deacon Einar bring into the wooden hall—for he was lying there—some very fair tapestries and two flagons wrought preciously.

Then said the bishop to Sir Egil: ‘These tapestries, Sir Egil, we will give thee, and likewise these flagons wherewith thou mayest deck thy room fairly; also we will give thee our gold ring which we have had wrought and have worn, and there is in it a holy relic of a bone of the sainted John, Bishop of Hólar.

Then he took that same ring from his finger and handed it to him; and as soon as Sir Egil had thought to keep the ring, then the bishop snatched the ring from him, saying: ‘Thou shalt not get the ring till I am dead; thou wilt keep me more in mind afterwards.’



It was done even as he said. Then said the bishop to Sir Egil that he would send him that summer to Norway to the archbishop, with that tidings about his death, which he said he knew would quickly come to pass. Then were the letters written which were to go on to the archbishop, wherein Lord Laurence declared that it would better serve the church, both lay and learned, in Hólar see to have an Icelfander for a bishop than a Norwegian; for he would know the character of the people better. In all ways the bishop prepared for his departure like one that was whole; but all could see how his strength faded. At . . .

*[Here ends the Manuscript; and the end of the history for the three last days of Laurence's life is lacking, for he died on the 16th of April. For his last day Einar's Annals say:]*

On the last day of his life he bade Sir Egil and Deacon Einar read in his hearing the  
April 16,  
1331 offices of the Holy Ghost, and when they were read he thus spoke: 'Ye twain are both my disciples, and therefore I entreat you to keep these offices hereafter every day.'

Then brother Árni read mass, and the bishop made all his due responses in the Mass, and after Mass, when the blessing was given upon those who stood by, he yielded up his soul to God, as I should truly trust. Also Sir Thorstein Illugason bore witness that he had never been by any man who had departed so wonderfully from the world as Lord Bishop Laurence.



## NOTES.

1. CH. I. p. 1. *Admonished me to keep.* That Einar Haflidason, though nowhere so named, was the author of this Saga, Dr. Vigfússon proves clearly in his preface to *Biskupa Sögur*, vol. i. His principal reasons are—

- (1.) The frequent identity of language between the Saga and the Annals which are known to be Einar's. If the author of the Saga and Einar had been different, one of them would have to be considered as borrowing the words of the other about matters he had seen with his own eyes ; which is most unlikely.
- (2.) The constant allusions in the Saga to Einar as a bosom friend of Laurence ; chaps. 44, 47, 65, and see *Index*.
- (3.) The allusions to Einar's father, Haflidi Steinsson. Einar is of course also the *one who was night and day in his service*, a few lines lower.

2. CH. I. p. 2. *This account.* Written more than fifteen years after Laurence's death in 1331. This is proved (Vigfússon) by the allusion in ch. 40 to 'Árni Vadi the archbishop,' who was not archbishop till 1346. Einar's Annals give 1307 for his birth, and the following prayer :—  
'I, a sinner, entreat all who read or hear this history to pray to God that on Doomsday I may be reckoned among his chosen, and may his blessed mother Mary succour me in my dying hour and beg mercy for me of her blessed Son.  
*Ave Maria mater domini succurre mihi peccatori hic et in futuro seculo, Amen.*'

3. CH. II. p. 2. *Illugi, otherwise Hilarius*. Cp. *Jón's Saga*, ch. 7, where the founding of the Northern see is described. 'At Hólar . . . dwelt a worthy priest named Illugi, son of Biorn. Of all the worthy men in the Northern Quarter, he only was ready to rise up from his father's heritage for the love of God and the needs of Holy Church. For ere that there had been long beatings of the bush (*þæfor*) betwixt the chief men, as to who should quit his father's heritage and homestead, and none was ready to do so, save he only. And all can see that this he did for God's sake, and he might well hope for what must now have been fulfilled, namely, that God would give him a fair home in bliss everlasting, which may well be called the inheritance of the good.'

4. CH. III. p. 4. *Keep a waterfast*; drink no wine or beer.

5. CH. III. p. 4. *These things befell abroad*. Einar, the Annalist, now and then spoils the flow of his Saga by these Annual Registers. They are bare and often grammarless lists of crusades, poisonings, battles, marvels; in fact, all the doings of the great world, strangely mixed up, and seen belated and awry through the spectacles of a monk in a remote island, which was shut off half the year from news. The vital change for Iceland—*Norwegian laws came*—has bare mention.

6. CH. III. p. 5. *Contest over the glebes (stadamál)*. Also ch. 5, p. 10, *claim to the demesnes*: and ch. 6, p. 10. This attempt to impropriate for Holy Church, under the pretext of Scriptural injunction, the estates of the lay Icelanders, is recorded in the *Second Life of St. Thorlák*, ch. 12 (*Bis. Sög.* i. 275). Thorlák, at his consecration in 1178, was instructed by Archbishop Eysteinn that 'all the church estates which were by old custom held by laymen should now be all under the bishop's power according to the directions which were attested by the orders of the apostles and holy fathers.' The struggle, begun by Thorlák, to enforce this decree was called *stadamál*, the *suit* or *litigation* of the *steads* or *livings*; after it had lasted more than a century, it partly subsided, while Laurence was still a priest, under an agreement made in 1296 (see *Icel. Dict.* s.v. and end of ch. II below, 'twelve yeomen confirmed church property by oath').



7. CH. VI. p. 19, *Sigurd*. This Mödruvellir compromise is also named in *Arni's Saga*, ch. 53 (*Bis. Sög.* i. 750); and the writer adds, 'and this happened on many other estates.' By the time Laurence had become bishop, the *stadamál* had partly ceased, but the struggle began again within the church between bishop and abbot: witness the wrangling over Mödruvellir itself which fills the end of our Saga.

8. CH. VII. p. 12, *Flitting-days* (*fardagar*): 'four successive days in spring, at the end of May (O. S.) in which householders in Iceland changed their abode.' (*Dict. s.v.*)

9. CH. XI. p. 19, *Long fast*, Icel. *langa-fasta*; 'Lent' was the foreign word.

10. CH. XV. p. 25, *Got hold of the ring of the church door*. Of course for sanctuary. *Clerks* means 'clergy' (*klerkar*) throughout.

10a. CH. XIV. p. 23, *Fire came up from Mount Hekla*. This was in 1300. It is odd that Einar never mentioned in ch. 7 above (though he names the earthquake), or in ch. 10 below, the great eruption of 1294, thus described in his *Annals* for that year:—'The fifth fire on Mount Hekla came so furiously and with such an earthquake, that far and wide in Fljóts Hlid and in Rangárvellir and beyond the River Thjór the earth split, and many houses fell because of the earthquake, so that men perished. Men could go dry shod over the Rang River because of the pumice. Far and wide in Lón [Inlet] and wherever the stream slackened the pumice was so thick as to hide the river. . . . At Húsatopt the hot spring vanished which had been there from all ages. So deep a gulf and cleft came that no man could see its bottom. . . . For three days in Flagbjörn Holt the becks were like milk to look upon.'

11. CH. XV. p. 26, *a moot*; Norse *thing*, the general word for a formal assembly.

12. CH. XVII. p. 28, *novellae*, Icel. *nýjúngar*, innovations in law.

13. CH. XIX. p. 34. Compare the episode of Snjólf in ch. 50. The good chronicler, like everybody else of his time, is ever on the watch for a judgment.

14. CH. XIX. p. 35, *St. Thorlák*. The life of this fiery bishop is translated by Mr. York Powell, and included in Vigfússon and Powell's *Origines Islandiae*. It is a very remarkable Saga. The *Annals* of Einar say that Thorlák was enshrined in 1292.

15. CH. XIX. p. 35, *Audite*. The song of Moses in Deuteronomy xxxii.

16. CH. XXIV. p. 47, *official*, Lat. *officialis*—a *vicarius* or deputy-in-charge.

17. CH. XXX. p. 58, *A man whom he trusted*. This and similar phrases point to Einar, the biographer, who names himself for the first time on p. 60 below, as a pupil of Laurence.

18. CH. XXXII. p. 63, *Gudmundar Saga*, ch. 8, *Bis. Sög.* i. 420-1.

19. CH. XXXV. p. 71 and ch. 48, p. 100, *ells*, of *wadmal* or stuff—the Icelandic measure of value in most cases. This arrangement of Audun's would have lowered the minimum of taxable incomes (120 ells here = 120 ells *a year*), and struck at the poor; hence the fury of the 'vagabonds' or 'land-loupers' (*lausamenn*).

20. CH. XXXVI. p. 74, *Pledging of Mary* (*Marlu-minni*). 'These memorial toasts were in the heathen age consecrated to the gods Thor, Odin, Bragi, Frey, Njord, who on the introduction of Christianity were replaced by Christ, the Saints, the Archangel Michael, the Virgin Mary, and St. Olaf. The toasts to the Queen, Army, etc., in English banquets are probably a relic of this ancient Teutonic ceremony.' (Dict. *s.v.* *Minni*.)

21. CH. XLIV. p. 92, *low-chant*; namely when the Host was elevated. The whole picture of Laurence's life and ministrations is very natural and touching; the early dews were still on Christianity in Iceland. People had, indeed, that childlike interest in church clothes and upholstery which is not yet extinct; but then they wrestled in prayer, like Vikings in battle with man or the elements.

22. CH. L. p. 103, *quit of the iron prong*. Does Snjólf mean his pride that had shackled him?

23. CH. LIII. p. 109, *singing-maids*. Also a kind of bell.

24. CH. LVI. p. 118. Einar says in the *Annals* for 1327, 'they made such a set at Laurence that they nearly suspended him from his bishopric.'

25. CH. LXV. p. 135, *Where the star had reached*. 'In olden and modern days in Iceland the time in the winter evenings was marked by the position of the Pleiades above the horizon . . . that constellation is therefore called "the star" *par excellence*.' (Dict. *s.v.* *Stjarna*.)





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